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[Vol. XII]

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FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH
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TWENTIETH, TWENTY-FIRST, TWENTY-SECOND
TWENTY-THIRD, TWENTY-FOURTH, AND
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY

HOLY DAYS

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SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, GAL. V. 16-24.
GOSPEL, S. LUKE XVIII. 11-19.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, 2 KINGS IX.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, 2 KINGS X TO VER. 32 OR 2 KINGS XIII.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Where are the Nine?

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
S. LUKE xvii. 17.



IN order to do justice to the act of mercy which is recorded of our Lord in to-day's gospel, and to the subsequent conduct of the lepers, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the physical, of the religious, and of the social misery which leprosy involved. The leprosy of the Bible belonged to the class of skin-diseases which are especially provoked by the dry, hot atmosphere of Egypt and the East acting upon a large exposed surface of the human body. These diseases are aggravated, as of old in Egypt, when large numbers of men work together in kilns, or among dry and powdery substances, or when they are neglectful of personal cleanliness. The leprosy of the Bible is not, it would seem, the disease which goes by that name in modern Europe, and which is still not uncommon in Spain and in Norway. The two diseases may have been always dis-

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tinct; but, on the other hand, it is well known that, in the course of years, a disease will exhaust its type, disappear, and then reappear in a modified form. The leprosy of the Bible is what is now known as the Mosaic or white leprosy. Its symptoms are enumerated in the fifteenth of Leviticus. It was the leprosy of Miriam, of Naaman, of Gehazi, of King Uzziah. It was little better than a living death. Beginning on the surface of the body, it poisoned all the springs of life. One by one, the limbs of the sufferer decayed and fell away. The leper, in Scripture language, was 'as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh forth from his mother's womb.' This loathsome appearance, which must have inspired the patient and all around him with a sense of extreme humiliation and disgust, was aggravated, it is needless to say, by very considerable suffering. And, to crown all, no cure was possible, except by divine interposition. No skill of man in that age could cope with this foul disease. 'Am I a god?' exclaimed the King of Israel, on receiving the Syrian ambassadors on behalf of Naaman—'Am I a god, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?'

And leprosy was not merely physical misery. It had in Jewish eyes, and on divine authority, a religious significance. It was viewed, not so much as a punishment of sin, but as a symbol of the expression of sin's presence and triumph. Beyond other, or alone among, diseases, leprosy was the chosen symbol of moral defilement. It was a visible manifestation of sin. The spiritual eye of a wilful or degenerate race was too dull to discover the stain and wound which moral evil leaves upon a spiritual being; but a loathsome disease might inflict this lesson in moral truth upon man's sluggish or reluctant senses. From physical evil which man did see, he might learn something about moral evil which he did not see. And this leprosy was the outward sign of an inward curse. It was, so to put it, a sacrament of moral death; and, accordingly, the leper was bidden by the ancient law to bear about on him the emblems of the dead. His garments were rent, as if in mourning for his dead self. His head was bare, as was the wont of those who held converse with the dead. His lip was covered. He could only be legally cleansed with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet, as those who had been defiled by contact with a corpse.

To this physical and religious misery there was added another—a social one. The leper was banished from the companionship which might have soothed, if it could not cure, his pain. He was put out of the camp, or city, or village, which had been his home, even when the disease was not yet proved, and when the suspected mark might turn out to be purely innocent. A seclusion of seven days, and, under certain circumstances, of seven days more, from the communion

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of the confederate people, was sternly prescribed by the ancient law; and, when leprosy had been proved, influence and station, however exalted, could do nothing to avert or to mitigate the sentence. Miriam, the sister of the great lawgiver himself, was thrust without the camp. Uzziah, king though he was, must dwell in a separate house till the day of his death. And this was in part, no doubt, a sanitary precaution. Whether based upon popular apprehensions, or on an accurate estimate of the contagious nature of the disease, I do not now inquire. But it was much more due to the religious estimate of leprosy which was current in ancient Israel. The leper was a living emblem of that sin which no mere human healer can cure or expel, of that sin which excludes from the camp or city of God, that everlasting city into which, as we know, 'there shall in nowise enter anything that defileth.'

It was in our Lord's last journey towards Jerusalem, on the frontier of Galilee and Samaria, that He saw, on the road towards a village which is not named, ten lepers. They might not come near the gates, as being tainted with the fatal disease—as lying under the ban of God. They kept together in a band, endeavouring, no doubt, to find in each other's company some solace for their sufferings, for their sense of humiliation and disgust, for their exclusion—their forced exclusion—from the civil and religious life of their countrymen.

Misfortune makes strange associates, and of these lepers one was a Samaritan. Illness, too, will make men think of God who have never thought of Him before; and as our Lord passed along the way He drew the attention of these poor outcasts to Him. Conscious of their misery, they stood afar off, and yet, even if nothing came of it, they must appeal to Him. They might, it was possible, they might have heard that one of the distinctive features of His work among men was that the lepers were cleansed. They might have heard that He had commissioned His representatives not merely to heal the sick, but specifically to cleanse the lepers. They had no doubt an indistinct idea that He was, in some sense, the healer of mankind; and so, as He passed, they lifted up their voices in agony, and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.'

This prayer was in itself an act of faith; and, as such, our Lord at once tested it. There they were, all the ten, covered with leprosy, but He bade them do that which already implied that they were perfectly cleansed. They were to take a long journey, which would have been a waste of labour unless they could believe that He could make it worth their while to take it. 'Go,' He said, 'show yourselves to the priests.' To go to the priests for inspection unless they were healed would only have led to a repetition of their sentence as proved

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lepers ; and, therefore, after His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord had first healed a single leper, and then had sent him to undergo the prescribed inspection. Here it must have perplexed them sorely. Here He does nothing for them at the moment. He bids them go in their uncleanness as if they were already cleansed. Could they trust Him? That was the question. Could they trust Him sufficiently to make the venture, to obey when obedience for the moment seemed irrational, in firm persuasion that obedience would be justified by the event? Yes, they took Him at His word. They set out for Jerusalem, a distant journey along an unwelcome road : but, lo, as they went, and, as it would seem, before they could have gone far, a change was already upon them. They looked around, each one at the other, each at himself. They saw that an unseen power was there, cleansing them, they knew not how, of the foul disease, restoring to them the freshness and purity of their childish years. 'As they went they were cleansed.' It was in the act of obedience that they obtained the blessing. It was by assuming that our Lord could not fail that they found Him faithful.

They were all of them cleansed—all the ten ; but, like Naaman, the Syrian leper, returning with his blessing for the man of God, one of them thought that something was due to the author of so signal a deliverance. He left the others to pursue their onward course. He left them to claim, at the hands of the priests, their restoration to the civil and religious life of Israel. He left them : He could not do otherwise. He left them. He turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and then he threw himself at the feet of his deliverer to thank Him for this act of mercy and of power. And our Lord blessed him once more in another and a higher way. A greater possession far, than that even of freedom from leprosy, was assured to this poor Samaritan in the parting words, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' But ere He did this our Lord uttered the exclamation, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.'

He who knew what was in man, and who had already tasted so much of human ingratitude, could not have been surprised at the conduct of the nine lepers. But He calls attention to it as having, like His own merciful act itself, a typical value. The averages of gratitude and ingratitude among men do not vary much from age to age ; and what here took place on a small scale would reappear, He knew full well, again and again in the history of Christendom and of the world. Of Christians it is probably true at this moment, literally true, that about ten per cent. are grateful to God for His mercies in nature and in grace, and ninety per cent. are more or less conspicu-

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ously wanting in anything that can be properly termed gratitude. And if this, or anything like it, be the true state of the case, it is a fact which certainly deserves attentive consideration; for want of gratitude towards Jesus Christ on the part of a Christian seems, at first sight, quite inexplicable, for gratitude is a natural virtue. Man is capable of gratitude, even in some of its highest forms, without the grace of Christ at all. Plato could thank the gods that he was a man first, then a Greek, then an Athenian; last, that he had been born in the age of Socrates. Seneca could write to his benefactor: 'I know that I cannot adequately thank you, but I shall not cease to say that I cannot.' Not merely civilised, but barbarous, human nature is capable of the courtesies and of the self-sacrifice of true gratitude. Nay; there have been remarkable traces of it among the lower creatures. Every one has heard of the lion who refused to touch a Christian when the latter was exposed to the beasts in the amphitheatre, because he recognised the friend who had once tended his wound in the cavern of the desert. And for us Christians how overwhelming are the motives to gratitude! The number, the magnificence, the practical value of the blessings which we receive from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, conspire, with our sense of His love and His generosity, to make gratitude, one would think, strictly inevitable. And yet, as if anticipating what would be the real state of the case, Scripture insists, with great copiousness and fervour, upon what might have been, we should have thought, taken for granted. 'When ye have eaten and are full,' says Moses, 'ye shall bless the Lord your God.' 'What shall I render to the Lord,' says David, 'for all the benefits that He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord.' 'In everything give thanks,' says S. Paul, 'for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' 'Whatsoever, ye Colossians, do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.' 'Be careful, you Philippians, for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' 'Let the peace of God dwell in your hearts, and be ye thankful.' 'I exhort therefore that, first of all,' he writes to Timothy, 'supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.' These are but a few of the passages which might be quoted, and their number shows how much, in the mind and judgment of the Holy Spirit, such precepts would be needed in the days to come. Whether they are needed or not, is a question for your consciences and for mine, a question on which it does not seem necessary to enter at very great length.

I. Of the unthankfulness which so seriously depresses and blights

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our whole modern Christian life, one reason, in many cases, is that we do not see our great Benefactor. I do not forget that some of us may feel true gratitude to those human friends who have been kind to us in past years, and who are now out of sight. But take men in the mass, and it is quite otherwise. Little by little, as the years pass, too many of us forget the benefits that we owe to the dead. The pressure, the importunity, of the present and of the seen makes us overlook the great debt of thought and love which we owe to the past and the unseen. There is a cynical proverb—one of those proverbs in which our poor human nature passes such stern judgment upon itself—‘Out of sight, out of mind.’

In the miracle before us, you will remember, the lepers were still uncleansed when they left our Lord that, in obedience to His command, they might show themselves to the priests. When the miracle was wrought upon them, the worker was out of sight. He would have walked on towards the village; and they, avoiding the village in obedience to the law, were pursuing their way towards Jerusalem. Yes, at that moment of awe and blessing they did not see Him. No shadowy form hovered around them to remind them that He was present in power to bless and heal them. No word like the ‘I will: be thou clean,’ which had healed the leper at Capernaum two years before, now fell upon their ears. No hand was raised over them in felt benediction; and yet, minute by minute, the foul disease upon them was disappearing: when, or how, they could not exactly tell; and, at last, they saw—they could not doubt it, they saw that they were healed, but the healer Himself they did not see. As now in His Church, so then He was out of sight, even when His action was most felt and energetic. His words still lingered in their ears; but it was not impossible, amid the distractions of a new scene, to forget their import; and thus, out of the ten men, nine actually did forget it.

Now what is this but a sample of what passes in our daily life? Numbers who are here know what it is to have recovered from illness, perhaps very serious illness. God, by His providence, has directed us to use means which might assist—which could not ensure—recovery. We have recovered, and now we proceed to account for our recovery. ‘It was a good constitution,’ we say, ‘that carried us through’; or, ‘It was a skilful change of treatment just at the crisis of the illness’; or, ‘It was a change in the weather’; or, ‘It was a change of air.’ Now, if this were not intended to be a complete account of the matter—if it was remembered that weather, climate, medical skill, strength of constitution, are all instruments in the hands of a supreme agent, and that, ever mindful of His agency, we are merely describing the particular instrument which He has selected

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to carry out His purpose, then no harm would be done, but do we not too often stop short at the secondary or immediate cause of our recovery, and altogether forget the first cause? We see the secondary cause—the first, or real, cause we do not see, and we are so largely the slaves of sense that the horizon of our view becomes the measure of our gratitude. Alas! how do we thus turn God's loving generosity against Himself. Unlike those vulgar benefactors who insist upon being recognised while they dispense their bounties, God, generally speaking, hides His hand. He acts through laws which seem to operate spontaneously. He acts through agents who are, at the moment, perfectly free and self-determining. He conceals Himself behind the vast processes of nature, behind the slow movements of history, behind the clouds of heaven, till, at last, we conceive of the world, of the universe, as going on without Him—without Him, its sole author, its absolute Lord. His generous self-concealment is taken for a forced inactivity, and, of those who still believe Him to have been the author of all that is not Himself, too many think of Him as men now-a-days think of those old builders of schools and colleges, who have left their great foundations to later ages, and are powerless to exert any control over their handiwork. Thus God's very generosity only provokes our thanklessness. He keeps out of sight, and we take it for granted that He would show Himself if He could, that His agency is only invisible because it is shadowy or unreal. Oh, singular perversity of our fallen nature, which is thus bound down and enslaved in its captivity to sense that we forget God our Saviour, chiefly because He is too loving to overwhelm us at once with the sense of what we owe to Him!

II. And a second cause of unthankfulness is our imperfect appreciation of God's gifts. No doubt, while the nine lepers were covered with their foul disease, placed under a social and religious ban, excluded from the society of their countrymen, they would have thought that no blessing in life could possibly compare with that of being cured of leprosy. But what did they think after the cure had been wrought? Too probably, something like this, that health was no such peculiar blessing after all, since health, when they looked around, was shared by multitudes. In being free from leprosy they were, after all, only like the great majority of their countrymen. Why should they become enthusiastic over a condition of things which was not the exception, but the rule? And is not this the temper of many Christians nowadays? We are not—I admit it,—we are not incapable of gratitude. We can rouse ourselves to acknowledge signal and extraordinary blessings. The one survivor from a wreck, or in a railway catastrophe, can still say, 'Thank God!' with unaffected sincerity. But why should he thank God for benefits which he shares with all the

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world?—for existence, for preservation, for life, for food, for strength, for the use of reason, for friends, for home, and the like? He does not say that he ought not to be thankful for these things: he secretly thinks to himself that his gratitude will be somehow vulgarised if it is lavished upon these every-day gifts. Had God given less, or had He given what He gives less indiscriminately, He would, it appears, have been thanked more warmly and more frequently than He is.

And this same feeling is sometimes applied even to the blessings of grace and redemption. All our lives we have heard of God's 'inestimable love in the redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ,' of 'the means of grace,' and of 'the hope of glory' beyond this world. We think so little of it, it may be, because this blessing is in its scope so vast and so inclusive. If the Eternal Son of God had redeemed us and none others; if, instead of willing all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, He had made a very select few, ourselves among the rest, objects of His exceptional love, then, we think, it had been otherwise; but when His love is as diffused as the rays of the sun in heaven; when He opens His arms upon the Cross to all the families of mankind, and bids any who will to drink of the water of life freely, men ask, 'Why should we individually dissolve into ecstasies of gratitude in acknowledgment of blessings which are the portion, confessedly, of countless multitudes?'

This estimate of a blessing which takes little account of it, unless it be a rarity, like hot-house fruit or flowers in mid-winter, or in the early spring, is not really due to a high ideal of excellence which will see the great only in the unwonted. Its true source is that dulness, that harshness, of spiritual perception, which health and prosperity too often inflict upon the soul. We cannot see clearly through the thick film which has thus been formed over the spiritual eye. If we did, how impossible would it be to forget that God could not, without being untrue to His own glorious perfections, mete out His love and sympathy in the narrow measure which, it seems, would earn our gratitude! If we did see, we should own, with full and thankful hearts, that love is love, blessings are blessings, salvation is salvation, whether we share them with the many or with the few. The deliverance of the lepers was not the less signal because the health to which they were restored was the portion of the great majority of their countrymen; nor was their gratitude less due because, in another form, it was due from thousands of Israelites.

III. And a third reason in many minds against cultivating and expressing thankfulness to God—men do not mention it—is the utilitarian one. Men do not see—if they said out what they think

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—do not see the good of thankfulness. The value of prayer, of course, in Christian eyes is plain enough. Christians believe that certain blessings are to be obtained from God by the instrumentality of prayer; and not to pray is to forfeit the blessings which prayer obtains. ‘But thankfulness,’ men say to themselves, ‘what does it win for us that is not already ours without it? Man already enjoys that for which he gives thanks, and God surely does not want our thanks as if they were a sort of equivalent for His bounty. He blesses us out of the joy of doing so; and whether we thank Him or not must be of small concern to such a being as He is.’ Certainly, God does not expect to be repaid for His benevolence by any equivalent in the way of thanksgiving that you or I can possibly offer Him. And yet He will have us thank Him, not for His own sake, but for ours. He, enthroned in His uncreated perfections, He loses—can lose—nothing, though we, to our loss, should forget Him altogether. But we cannot be wanting to the great duty of thankfulness without being untrue to the very fundamental law of our existence, without the worst results upon ourselves. For what is thankfulness, such as God demands? What is it but that which is at the bottom of all real human excellence—the frank acknowledgment of truth? Just as prayer is the recognition of our dependence upon God amid the darkness and uncertainties of the future, so thankfulness is the recognition of our indebtedness to God for the blessings of the past. And to acknowledge truth like this is always moral strength: to refuse to acknowledge truth like this is always moral weakness. Accordingly, the worst excesses of the heathen world are traced by S. Paul up to the ingratitude of the Gentile nations for the light of nature and of conscience. ‘When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.’ And, in the same strain, all the later apostasy and misery of Israel is referred, in the prophetic song of Moses, to the original vice of forgetting what God had done for that favoured people. ‘God had found Israel,’ says the lawgiver, ‘in a desert and in the waste howling wilderness. He led him about; He instructed him; He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.’ But, then, after all, looking across the centuries, Moses thus addresses the degenerate race: ‘Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.’ And then he

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utters, in the divine name, the prophetic sentence, 'And He said, I will hide My face from them. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.' And then He adds, in yearning love, 'Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!'

And this law is not the less true of individual Christians and of Christendom. Nations, churches, men, who forget their one great Benefactor, are in a sure way to ruin, temporally and eternally. God cannot be forgotten with impunity. Thankfulness, like the rivers which flow into the ocean, and which are again replenished from it—thankfulness is the source of new blessings to the soul. Only in thankful hearts is the Christian life securely maintained, and to that life it contributes three important results.

1. It first of all stimulates us most powerfully to active well-doing. A man will do out of gratitude more, much more, than he will do out of fear or out of hope of reward. Thankfulness for redemption was the motive power of a life like that of S. Paul, as it has been the motive power of all the greatest and most fruitful lives that have been lived in Christendom. 'He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again'—this is the motto of all such lives. Gratitude, like love, lives not in words, but in deed and in truth. Often those who feel most what has been done for them say least about it; but they do most. Gratitude can work; gratitude can suffer; gratitude can persevere; but one thing gratitude, for the inestimable love of God in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ—one thing gratitude cannot do: it cannot bring itself to feel that it has done enough. It cannot in this world lie down with a sense that it has really paid off its debt to the Redeemer.

2. And, again, gratitude makes worship, especially public worship, real, serious, reverent. Praise is the very soul of the Church's worship, and praise is the voice of thankfulness. The first object, we are told twice every day, which makes us Christians assemble and meet together, is that they may render thanks for the great benefits which they have received at the hands of God. And these thanks are expressed in the greater number of the Psalms, in the hymns, in the canticles, in the *Te Deum* beyond, perhaps, other hymns—(who but the thankful can possibly understand such a psalm as that?),—above all, in the Holy Sacrament, on that very account named by the first Christians the Eucharist, wherein, to use the words of our Prayer Book, 'we entirely desire God's fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.' It has been said that our public worship would be much less unworthy of Him to whom it is addressed if, before beginning, each Christian would think exactly

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what he most needs to obtain by prayer at the hands of God. It may be said, with at least equal truth, that this improvement, so much to be desired, would be secured if we all of us had more of the spirit of the one leper in the gospel, and less of the spirit of the nine; if each act of worship could be a conscious turning back on the road of life, to fall at the Redeemer's feet and give Him thanks for the incalculable blessings of pardon and of grace which those who know anything about Him—anything about themselves—know that He, and He alone, has won for them.

3. And, lastly, thankfulness here on earth is the best possible preparation for the spirit and for the life of heaven. Heaven is the home of thankful souls. The occupations of heaven would be misery to those who feel not gratitude. 'Blessing, and honour, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and power, and glory, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.' 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' How shall we sing those songs, or any of the songs of the redeemed, hereafter, if here and now we do not learn their spirit? If the habits which are being formed by us in this life will be carried by each of us into the eternal world, how earnestly should we pray God to give us that 'due sense of all His mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth His praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving ourselves to His service,' to whom, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, power, might, majesty, and dominion, henceforth and for ever!

H. P. LIDDON.

Who is my Neighbour?

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

S. LUKE X. 29.

BY these words the lawyer in to-day's gospel intended to put our Lord, if he could, into a difficulty. He had begun by inquiring, in the catechetical fashion of the Jewish schools, what a man had to do in order to inherit eternal life; and he probably expected to be answered in such terms as would enable him to employ his learning and his logic before a public audience in making a damaging rejoinder. Our Lord, in reply, referred him back to his knowledge of the Mosaic law. 'What is written in the law? How readest thou?' Our Lord would have the lawyer answer his own question, and he did so in the simplest and most authoritative language of the ancient Scriptures, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy

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God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Plainly, this was enough to close the discussion. Our Lord simply approved. 'Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.' But such a conclusion as this was not at all what the lawyer had wanted. His object was not to be approved of by our Saviour by making a reply which any Jewish child could have made just as well. Still less was it his object to commit himself thus in public to an exacting measure of duty. He had wished on a public occasion to put the Great Teacher, who was taking so many hearts captive around him, into an obvious difficulty; and, when this proved impossible, he felt that some apology was needed to account for his ever having asked the question which he had just answered himself, and answered so well. 'But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?' The answer of the lawyer seemed simple enough, so he would imply, but there is just one term in it which is suggestive of most embarrassing ambiguity. What is the word neighbour meant to refer to? Does it mean the man in the next street? Does it mean a fellow-townsmen, or a countryman, or a co-religionist? Does it represent an accidental or a permanent relation? Is it a technical expression altogether, or has it a popular sense and range? 'Until this point is settled'—so the lawyer would suggest—'nothing is settled.' This vague, inclusive, indeterminate word may mean anything or nothing, and the original question—what a good Jew ought to do in order to inherit eternal life—is just as much unanswered as ever. This was the lawyer's reason for asking the second question. 'He, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?'

Now, our Lord answered this question, not by a definition, but by a narrative. A definition, we all know, may be much more exact than a narrative, but a narrative is often much more instructive than a definition. A definition addresses itself to the understanding; a narrative, generally at least, speaks to the heart. Had our Lord defined the word neighbour, the lawyer would, probably, have challenged the definition. He would have felt his credit as a disputant at stake. He would have felt, moreover, that he was dealing with an ordinary rabbi. But when he had answered our Lord's closing question—'Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?'—the lawyer was silent. That story of the Good Samaritan was, to such a man, nothing less than a moral revelation. It showed the lawyer that he stood there face to face with a master of the human heart.

The story of the Good Samaritan is, probably, the best known of our Lord's parables, and there is much to be said for the opinion

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that it is a narrative of an event which had actually occurred not long before; for the road between Jerusalem and Jericho had, in those days, a bad name: it was infested by highwaymen. On the other hand, it was constantly traversed by Jewish priests and Levites, who lived in great numbers in the town of Jericho, and who had to be often at Jerusalem in order to take their turns in the weekly service of the Temple. Thus, such an occurrence as that related by our Lord was antecedently probable. A Jewish traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho falls into the hands of the banditti, who take his clothes from him, and leave him wounded and half dead in the public road. So it happened that soon after a priest passes along the road, sees what has occurred, and thinking, probably, that nothing could be done, and that that part of the road was unsafe for travellers, hurries on. Then comes a Levite who seems to have taken a closer view of the wounded man. He, too, probably reflecting that the priest's example was a very good sanction for doing nothing, passes on his road. And then there comes a traveller of a race and of a religion that cannot often have ventured into that neighbourhood. A Samaritan, travelling on affairs of business, rides close to the wounded man. It is clear to him what has happened. Though his journey is one of pressing importance (so it is implied) he, nevertheless, dismounts. He is full of compassion for the past: he is ready with remedies needed at the moment: he makes provision for the future. He bends over the wounded man, and, drawing out the small flasks of wine and oil which Eastern travellers then generally carried, uses the oil to relieve the pain, and the wine (such was the practice of those days) to stop the bleeding. He binds up the wounds of the fainting man: he places him on the animal which he had himself been riding: he takes him to the nearest public inn, where he pays for his immediate bill of fare, and promises to discharge his remaining expenses when the cure is completed.

There are many and important lessons to be drawn from this parable. It shows how easy it is for us men of the sanctuary to be far less tender-hearted than laymen who pass their lives in matters which have nothing to do, for the most part, with the things of God. It shows how easily the religious conscience, so termed, may reason itself out of any sense of obligation to perform simple, primary, human duties. It gives us a rich and instructive lesson in the practical character of genuine philanthropy, and, behind the immediate interests and personages of the narrative, it shadows out, not indistinctly, the Divine and Eternal Charity taking compassion, in the fulness of the centuries, upon the wounds of suffering humanity, and placing redeemed man in the holy home of souls till the end of time.

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But we must turn aside from these points to consider the one point which answers the lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour?'

And this question of the lawyer's is answered by a counter-question which is put by our Lord. The lawyer had asked, 'Who is my neighbour?' Our Lord, at the conclusion of His narrative, asks, 'Which of the three—priest, Levite, Samaritan—was neighbour to the wounded man?' The lawyer meant, 'Who has a just claim on my time, my affections, my purse?' Our Lord asks, 'Who feels that his time, his purse, his compassion, are due to others?' Observe, our Lord does not ask, 'Was it priest, Levite, or Samaritan, that thought the wounded man his neighbour?' He does ask, 'Was it priest, Levite, or Samaritan, that was neighbour to the wounded man?' And the word neighbour, He thus implies, involves reciprocal relationship. In order to find out what it means, a man ought to put himself in the place of another man, with the question, 'Ought this man to help me, I being in what is now his place, and he being in mine?' This is the practical meaning of the 'as thyself.' Human self-love is to be the measure of Christian charity, and thus the neighbour of the parable is not, as we might have expected, the wounded Jew. The neighbour of the parable is the Samaritan who aided him—the Samaritan who sees in the wounded Jew only a wounded man, and who feels that had he been the wounded man the Jew ought to have helped him,—would have helped him too.

A Samaritan! What a neighbour to a Jewish imagination! He was a living outrage on all that a Jew revered and loved. Did not pagan blood flow in his veins? Was it not widely believed, and, apparently, on credible grounds, that he still worshipped the idols of his forefathers that were buried beneath the tree at Shechem? What was his strange version of the holy law, but the legacy of an apostate? What was his temple at Gerizim but a symbol of religious rebellion? A Samaritan—was not his name cursed publicly in the service of the synagogue? Was it not pronounced in private life only as the bitterest and coarsest reproaches—only as the synonym for having a devil? Was not his witness refused as worthless in any Jewish court? Was he not debarred, as heathens were not debarred, from becoming, if he would, a proselyte? A Samaritan, indeed! How could it be that a name which recalled seven centuries of suspicion and hatred—that a name which implied separation of race, of political sympathy, of religious conviction—that a name which roused in the Jewish heart a fiercer anger, by far, than that of the pagan races who had robbed Israel of his wealth and of his liberty,—how could it be that such a name should be proposed to Jews as the type and the symbol of human brotherhood? For intensity and

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venom, none of the great historical animosities could compare with this between Jew and Samaritan, and, therefore, when our Lord put the question to the lawyer, 'Which was the true neighbour?' the lawyer could not bring himself to pronounce the execrated name: he could only say quietly that the true neighbour was he that had showed mercy to the wounded man. Our Lord had, in fact, chosen an instance which would prove in the clearest terms to the Jewish mind that this law of neighbourly duty has no frontier whatever within the human family—that it spans the range of humanity.

And here it may be well to ask on what grounds this teaching really rests. Why is it more than a Utopian aspiration, than an impracticable sentiment? Why are we bound to keep it before us, to throw it into the form of practical precept, to cherish it with the reverence which is due to a moral conviction? Once more, on what does it depend?

I. And the answer is, first, that it depends on a natural fact, the fact that we men all have common parents, that, however widely removed from each other, we are all really relations, that we constitute one great and ancient family. This natural fact is taught in the Bible which describes the original creation, you will remember, not of one among several pairs of human beings, but of that one pair from which all other human beings have sprung. This natural fact is asserted by the great Apostle at Athens, when he would recall a clever but volatile people to a deeper sense of the seriousness of life. 'God,' he says, 'has made of one blood all the nations of the earth.' Doubtless, the unity of our own race has been disputed in modern days, but it is asserted with at least equal determination; and, until the scientific world is of one mind upon the subject, we Christians may continue to believe our Bibles, especially in a matter like this, of distinctly religious importance. It is, indeed, sometimes said that what is really essential in Christianity does not depend upon speculative doctrines or opinions like this. Men draw what they think a clear and deep distinction between their theology and their religion. But, in fact, the connection between belief and practice is much more intimate than such persons suspect. In some cases every man can trace the connection. In others it is less immediately apparent, but not, on that account, the less real. Just let us suppose that it were really held to be certain that, instead of being descended from a single pair, the human race was of hybrid origin, made up of the confusion of a great many distinct races—I will not say of men, but of creatures approximating, more or less nearly, to the human type. What would become of the moral ideas which assume that humanity is a great organic whole? What would become of the sympathies, of the duties, of the aspirations, which

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best us men as consciously members of a common race? It may be said that these common human interests would remain intact, however we might account, speculatively, for the origin of the human race, however we might determine its relations to the races around. But is this really the case? Would it really be possible to endeavour to cherish and practise love, respect, community of feeling, if, at every turn, we were haunted by the question how far this or that apparent human being really shared our nature at all, and did not rather belong to some race of creatures which had little in common with our own beyond a certain similarity of outward form? What is it which imports such moral horror into the ideas of murder and cannibalism, but the conviction that we human beings are really members of one family, and have the same blood flowing in our veins? Destroy this conviction, and it will be difficult to prove either that what we now deem human rights ought to be respected, or else that they ought not to be very largely extended. If the frontier of the human race be as indefinite as is sometimes suggested, it is not easy, I submit, to understand upon what principles of morality or justice some, at any rate, of the more intelligent prisoners who are now caged up in our public gardens are still detained there, or why they are denied some sort of secular education, or deemed incapable of holding property or of voting for the representatives of the people. Why, in short, are they not, in view of some recent theories, just as truly our neighbours as the wounded man on the road to Jericho, or as the Samaritan who aided him? Why must we hesitate to admit that our existing estimate of their claims upon our charity is not altogether neighbourly? No, a paradox in the long-run is its own best corrective. Whatever we may say in moments of speculative delirium, we all of us do, practically, act upon the belief that mankind forms a single race, with a sharply defined frontier separating it from all other races whatever. We act upon the supposition that this fact is the ground of those many and exacting duties which we owe to one another.

No less is this fact the basis of all that Christianity teaches us about our need of a Redeemer, and about His relation to our kind. Read the last ten verses of the fifth chapter of S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and you will see what I mean. The whole of the argument supposes mankind to be descended from a single father, whose one fatal act of disobedience compromised us all. If the human race has, not one, but several ancestors, then its moral condition might possibly be something very unlike that which S. Paul supposes. Then our relations to the great Restorer would, as certainly, become very doubtful indeed.

II. And this brings me to the second ground of the point before us

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—of this widened and generous idea of my neighbour which is enjoined by the parable.

And it depends, secondly, on the high honour put upon our race by our Lord Jesus Christ. He took our nature upon Him. Before his Incarnation the idea of humanity had been well-nigh lost. The most cultivated peoples of the ancient world spoke of all others than themselves as barbarians, and treated them with corresponding contempt. The most religious people of antiquity spoke of all outside the natural pale as Gentiles, and, when they could not despise, hated them unreservedly. In his fallen state, man looks upon his brother man as his natural enemy. Before the Incarnation the idea of humanity seemed to have disappeared as truly as if mankind had never really been one family, and were only an agglomeration of similarly formed creatures after all. And not the least part of our Lord's great work for us men was to restore the idea of what we really are, and of our true relationship to each other; and He did this partly by such precepts as 'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you'; 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Such precepts imply an estimate of man altogether different from that which passed current in the world of that day. But He did much more than this to restore the true idea of humanity, by taking our nature upon Himself. What was this poor frail humanity, that the Eternal and All-holy should fold it around His being and make it His own? What was it that He should, as His Apostle proclaims, in the fulness of His condescension, pass by the orders of the angelic hierarchy, and should appear as a human Child in the cradle of Bethlehem, and as a human sufferer on the Cross of Calvary? Something, assuredly, it was, and is, distinct from any race of creatures around, something so beautiful in its ruins, so noble in its very degradation, that as He is in the supper-room He, the Lord of all, must gird Himself to kneel at their feet, and pour on them, soiled as they were with the dust of ages, the water of His divine hospitality, that, as on the Cross, He, the perfect moral being, must be made sin for it and shed His life-blood for a sufferer whom no less costly remedy would have availed to save.

It is not necessary, to say more, but henceforth, in Christian eyes, humanity must be ennobled. Henceforth, as in the body of Christ, so elsewhere, there is for Christians neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, male nor female, bond nor free. Henceforth, the suffering are the aristocracy of humanity in Christian eyes; and Christians obey their Lord when they see in the hungry, in the thirsty, in the homeless, in the naked, in the sick, in the captive not other human beings, but Himself.

H. P. LIDDON.

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II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Credentials of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. GALATIANS V. 22, 23.



PAUL has just been recounting what he calls the 'works of the flesh.' It is an ugly and a hateful list, and lacks only one item to make it just twice as long as the contrasted catalogue which fills our text with melody. There is great power in this method of showing up opposite kinds of life. Take the two tallies by triplets, and judge:

'Hatred, variance, emulations,'

'Love, joy, peace ;'

'Wrath, strife, seditions,'

'Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness ;'

'Envyings, murders, drunkenness,'

'Faith, meekness, temperance.'

What a suggestive trilogy it is! The very statement is an argument. We have but to look to be convinced. What man with his eyes open would undertake the works when he might have the fruit? This very use of words throws a flood of light upon the nature of the choice: the *works* of the flesh, he says, and the *fruit* of the Spirit. Sin is a hard task-master, and the slaves of sin must toil. God, on the other hand, is a gracious householder, and to those who own His Fatherhood He gives the freedom of the heavenly garden, which is full of fruit. The one sort of existence is a perpetual thralldom, with death as the final wage; the other is sheltered and shadowed by the tree of life, the boughs of which are golden with their precious yield. The treadmill and the orchard—is it possible for any one to hesitate about his choice? Are you meaning to let yourself be worked to death by sin, when there is this possibility of being nourished unto eternal life and made sharer of an everlasting felicity? But this point, important though it be, is not the one which I especially desire to emphasise just now.

I. Our text tells us what these things of the Spirit are, and I bid you take notice that they all of them, without exception, come under the head of what we know as Christian character. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and the rest; when you find these in a life be assured that back of them lies the Holy Ghost. They are the credentials of

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the Spirit. I am the more anxious to insist upon this criterion of spirituality, because nowadays there is so much confusion of thought with respect to the whole subject. A great many people are misled by the false inference that because the spiritual is invisible therefore whatever is invisible must be in some sense spiritual; and that if they individually are giving close attention to things unseen they are, by the very act, showing themselves devoted to the things of the Spirit. This is not only a fallacy, it is a harmful fallacy, and harmful moreover to those natures that are of the better type, for to take an interest in things unseen certainly marks an advance upon the state of mind in which only solids and surfaces attract one. I cannot think, therefore, that we shall be misemploying precious time if we bend our thoughts for a little while towards this question of spirituality, what it is, and what it is not. Bear in mind all the while what I said just now, that only those things ought to be called the things of the Spirit that can be worked up into character, or, to borrow a scientific phrase, expressed in terms of character. Heat, electricity, and motion are, as we say, convertible one into another. Wherever we have heat, there we have possible electricity, and possible motion. Now, my point is that whatever lays claim to being reckoned among the things of the Spirit must substantiate that claim by showing itself capable of being converted into character. It is not enough for it to show that it is convertible into something non-material, or that it stands related somehow to the unseen universe; more than this, it must establish kinship with the essential manhood and the essential womanhood, it must take hold of human conduct.

Let me give some instances of forms of the invisible that are sometimes mistaken for and confounded with the spiritual. This will help to bring our subject within the confines of daily life and common experience, and make us feel sure that we are chasing a real and not a phantom enemy of our peace. Perhaps the crudest of all the misconceptions in this line is that which confuses the physical forces of the world we live in with the things of the Spirit. Ever so many people, some of them highly intelligent people, are standing aloof from the religion of Jesus Christ to-day with the vague expectation in their minds that if they will only be patient a little longer, the students of nature, the experts in chemistry, physics, and biology will furnish them with a new religion founded upon demonstrable facts, such facts as may be observed by instruments of precision, and tabulated by approved scientific methods. In other words, they are awaiting a day when it shall no longer be thought necessary to live by creed or belief, and when it shall have become possible to live by exact scientific formula instead, certainty having been substituted for faith. There are unworthy motives that lead some men to take up

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this attitude, but upon these I shall not dwell. Let me speak rather of what seems at first sight reasonable considerations. One of these is the greater intimacy with the world of invisible powers and non-material agencies which modern discovery has forced upon us. We live (the religious and the non-religious alike) we all live ever so much closer to the realm of things unseen than we used to live. Electricity is not only adding marvellously to the convenience of living, but it is introducing all mankind to a tract of religion of existence with which until recently only a few advanced students were even distantly acquainted. The little children of to-day are taking as matters of course truths at the first disclosure of which our elder generation stood awestruck. They roam about at will over fields at the very edge of which we read, not so very long ago, the words 'No thoroughfare.' Nay, more than that, the very horizon itself is on the move, and pushes itself further and further from us as the days unfold, so that there seems to be no limit to the reach of our excursions into the unseen world that everywhere lies at back of the world seen. This fact of itself is enough to upset an unsteady mind, and to send excitable imaginations wool-gathering. 'Surely,' they say to themselves, 'religion must lie this way somewhere, and if we wait a while it will embody itself out here in the spaces of the invisible, in such fashion as to leave us in no manner of doubt as to how we ought to live and how we ought to worship, if in fact we need worship at all.' To be sure, the chariot wheels of the new day seem for some unaccountable reason to tarry, but we feel confident that the ears listening in this direction will be the first to hear the rattle of their approach. Must it not be that purely scientific ethics are just waiting to be born?

II. And then, besides this confidence inspired by our larger acquaintance with the out-of-sight region in which nature's forces have their play, there is the further feeling, that in days like these when people know so much that never before was known, asking them to believe is an impertinence. Who cares for hearsay when he can have demonstration? Who would any longer walk by faith when at last it has become possible for him to walk by sight? To all of which the sufficient answer is that religion deals not with relations between things, but with relations between persons, and that its central word is Duty. What do I owe God? What do I owe my fellow-man? These are the questions of religion, and no amount of acquaintance with the secrets of nature, no supposable enlargement of our knowledge of our agencies advances us in this direction by so much as a single inch. Natural science can do marvellous things. She can catalogue the stars, she can weigh the sun, she can analyse the ray of light that has been travelling earthwards for a thousand years;

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but she cannot rule a state, or discipline a family, or mould a saint; for the moment we touch morals and religion we find that personality is the principal thing, and personality is something which neither telescope nor spectroscope can read. Drive a stake down here, therefore, and fasten to it the words, 'The physical, even though invisible, must not be confounded with the spiritual. It belongs to another order.'

III. But what about the metaphysical, what about that region of man's life over which pure intellect holds sway, the wide domain of the understanding, philosophy—can we find the things of the Spirit there? Very many are persuaded that we can. They have the sense to perceive and to acknowledge that it is absurd to seek answers for the soul's questions and comfort for the soul's sorrows out in the chilly stellar spaces, or under the hard lens of the microscope, and yet equally averse are they to confessing that there is any call for them either to search the Scriptures or to hear the Church. 'Let us think it out,' they say, 'as best we can. It must be that man has within himself all that is essential to his well-being. Why acknowledge in this matter any dependence on the past? Why look backwards to the prophets, or Apostles, or even to the one called the Christ? Our own minds supply the raw material of religion, let us work it up for ourselves.' This, or something like this, I take it, is what has lain behind all the theosophies, so-called, that from time to time have made their appearance and found followings. The notion seems to be that by thinking out some theory of deity, gathering up and piecing together what men have at any time thought or said about God, we in the very process become spiritual, make ourselves religious. We cannot thus think ourselves into the Kingdom of Heaven. No doubt the understanding plays an important part in religion. Without a certain measure of intelligence it is impossible to apprehend the things of the Spirit. But to suppose that by intelligence alone we can work ourselves into right relations with God and man, which is the object of religion, is much the same thing as saying that because intelligence is essential to good soldier-ship, therefore to be intelligent is to be soldierlike. No, there is something to be added to intelligence, namely, courage, before we can have the soldier, and so also must the things of the mind be supplemented by the things of the Spirit before we can have the saint. Keenness is not enough, we must have goodness. Have you never known people who could argue questions of religion by the hour together, discuss points of theology all day long, but who yet did not strike you as being in any perceptible measure spiritually-minded? The human intellect is in many important respects like a machine, and once started works automatically. It is doubtless,

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more worthily employed when engaged with some subjects than when engaged with others, just as a loom may be said to be more worthily employed when weaving a piece of tapestry than when the shuttles are flying to and fro between the threads of some homelier fabric, but all the while, in both cases, the mechanical movement is one and the same. Theological argumentation is just as human as any other kind of argumentation. It deals with the highest of all subjects, to be sure, but the law of its method is as fixed as the law of evidence, as mechanical as the law of the tides. Theologue, theist or theosophist, it matters not, whoever rests his hope of finding God and living at peace with Him upon the fine quality of his intelligence, is doomed to disappointment. The best peace of all is the kind that passes understanding, but it is not reached that way. So then, drive a second stake here and hang on it the words, 'The intellectual is not necessarily the spiritual.'

Again there is, as there has always been, a considerable number of people who make a religious merit of wandering about in the weird and shadowy region that lies along the boundary of human life, and hedges it with mystery. I refer to that debateable ground, where the skirmish-lines of two armies meet, and which in general may be said to be bounded on the south by sanity, and on the north by madness. It is the favourite rendezvous of all that is abnormal, preternatural, and morbid. Hither the hypnotists resort, and the dabblers in whatever is occult, the mediums and the mind-readers, and all their kin. Observe, I do not say that it is a region that ought not to be explored; swamps are all the better for being cleared and drained, even though the clearing and the draining sometimes cost us valuable lives. By all means let us have as much 'psychical research' as may be necessary, only pray do not let us be cajoled into the notion that this sort of thing can by any sort of possibility do duty as religion. There is nothing religious about it. To pretend that there is, is the worst sort of charlatanry. As investigation it is curious and often, no doubt, fascinating, but to mistake it for religion is like mistaking pathology for hygiene, the study of the laws of disease for the practice of the laws of health. Here, then, drive a third stake and hang on it this judgment, 'The weird and the occult are not the spiritual.'

How it will refresh us now to turn back to the clear, bracing, wholesome atmosphere of our text, and how grateful we ought to be to God that there is such a resort. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Really, we feel as if we were back among friends, do we not? What a simple criterion of the Spirit's presence it is, and yet how deep, how searching! The trouble with the other methods

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of becoming spiritual, or rather one trouble with them, is that they presuppose exceptional capacity, unusual gifts and powers. But there is not a man or woman or child for whom such spirituality as our text pictures is not within reach. These gracious guests are waiting to come in at the doorway of our soul this very day if only you will let them. You have not to make yourself a scientific expert, or an intellectual giant, or a mystical adept, in order to call them yours. All you have to do is to let God pour them into your heart. When shall we ever learn that the best things come in the simplest ways, and are to be had for the asking? Who are the people who help to make your life endurable, who redeem the three-score years and ten from the reproach of being an arid and cheerless waste; are they not those who have in them and who shed about them in freest abundance, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and the rest? Surely when you come to count it up, it is very little that your famous friends, if you happen to have any, have done for you, or your accomplished friends, or your brilliant friends; the people who have really helped you have been those whose spiritual features you, at this moment, see looking at you from this gracious text of ours. Can you and I pray any better to-day than that He from whom all good gifts do come may ripen in our daily lives this blessed fruit, manifold in its variety, yet one in the source and secret of its virtue.

W. R. HUNTINGTON.

The Conflict with Sin.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
GALATIANS V. 17.

THE great conflict with sin comes after the pardon of sin. But there is this difference between the battle before, and the battle after, we have really received the grace of God; before, sin was in the ascendant, and good feelings had the lower ground! 'Sin reigned,' and the best that a man could say of himself was, that sometimes his religion rose up, and resisted, and perhaps even overcame the dominant sin. Now, it is 'grace' that reigns: the sin is a rebellious province—very strong, very powerful, and often even superior to the sovereignty of the higher influence. Nevertheless, the throne in the heart is God's—the evil is a faction—a tremendous faction—but still, only a faction in another's empire.

This was S. Paul's conflict, and David's—sin in violent antagonism to the established and recognised authority of God. This, and this

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only, is a Christian's warfare. We have not now to do with any other.

I. Whoever knows anything of the nature of his own heart would expect that the presence and the claim of good would immediately stir up the opposition and the virulence of evil. The fact is, that until there is some good, there can be no conflict at all. It is all—if it is not an abuse of the word to use it—it is all peace, too much peace, a fatal harmony, the devil's unity. If there be any one who has such peace that he has no conflict in his own heart, I tremble for that man. The work of grace has not yet begun in that man. A man who has lived all his life in darkness would not know that it was darkness. To be distressed by darkness he must have seen light. If you would calculate the horror of that night which rolled over the Saviour upon the Cross you must measure it by the intensity of the sunshine in which He had dwelt from all eternity.

In like manner, death is only a relative term. A stone, a corpse, does not know that it is dead; there must be life to know death. S. Paul's soul was earnestly alive when he said, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If he had not spiritual life, he never could have said that. The bad principle in us wants nothing to rouse and lash it into fury but to have the beauty of goodness fairly presented to it.

This was the effect which the law—'holy, just, and good,' as he called it—had upon S. Paul's mind. Observe some of his expressions; 'I had not known sin, but by the law.' 'Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.' 'Sin worked death in me by that which is good.'

In fact, such is man, that it needs little else but that a thing should be forbidden to make him wish to do it; and the prohibition of a passion is an incentive enough to make him indulge it.

II. And further, in the same argument, if there be a real, living agent, the enemy of our souls, the instigator to evil, the love of our misery, the hater of the glory of Christ, is not it to be believed that when a man attempts to escape from his thralldom, he will rivet his chains, or put forth his fascinations more powerfully against that man? Is not it then that he will rear himself into his giant form, or that he will exert a supreme royalty, as we conceive he did, when he stood up before the Son of Man, and said, 'Fall down and worship me'?

Indeed, this truth, that there must be grace before there can be conflict, and that the conflict follows the grace, lies very deep in the first prophecy of the Bible, that threat to Satan, therefore that promise to man, that some future day was coming, when that deadly concord, which was then existing between the two seeds, and which

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was our world's ruin, would be broken up by the appearance of a Saviour, and the strength of the virulence was made the beauty and the sweetness of the promise: 'I will put'—evidently a thing not then existing—'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

You, then, who feel your conflicts, you to whom the inner life is an agitation little guessed by those who see only the assumed calmness of a shallow surface; you, who wake up every morning to fight again and again the old battle of yesterday; you, who are to yourselves not as one nature, but two—not two, but many, and all arrayed against all—lift up your head out of the dust of that blinding fight, lift up your head, and rejoice! The fact that it is now no longer peace but war is your token of good. The severer the onslaught, the surer that token grows. They are wonderfully proportioned the one to the other—those forces that contend in that little ground of your heart; and you need no other proof but that the day is hot to be sure, and He is 'bringing you to His banquet-house, and that His banner over you is love.'

And it will be a great help to you, if you thus lay down at once, with yourself, that the conflict is not an accident, but a necessity, not exceptional in your case, but an universal rule, that it is the very condition of a Christian calling, and a part of the Christian's inheritance; it is the badge of discipleship, it is the fellowship of Jesus. And whatever else they may have gone through, or have been spared, out of this tribulation came every one of those saints who now stand before the throne, arrayed in white robes, with the palms in their hands.

III. We see, then, that in this warfare, there is, at least for a long time, a singular balance. Look, for instance, at the exact intention of the text, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,' *i.e.* the natural or carnal part of a renewed man puts forth strong desires against the spiritual part, and the spiritual part puts forth strong desires against the natural and carnal part,—and 'these are contrary'—lie—as the original Greek word is,—'lie over against the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

Which way? Cannot do the good things you would, because of the carnal part? Or, cannot do the evil things you would, because of the spiritual part? Which? Certainly both. Chiefly the latter. You cannot do the bad things you would because of the resistance or the prohibition of the spiritual taste that is in you.

In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—never let go the comforting belief that that seventh chapter of the Epistle to the

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Romans is a real portraiture of S. Paul's experience when he was a believer, and therefore of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; to give up that chapter as a picture of S. Paul's mind long after his conversion would be almost to yield a citadel of truth—in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, S. Paul places it rather the other way. There, he grieves that he could not do good, because of the evil that was present with him; but here to the Galatians, he gives more the comfort that they could not do the evil because of the countervailing good that was in them. The truth lies in bringing together both these. If the sin hinders the grace, so and yet more does the grace hinder the sin. And so the evenness of the balance makes the strength and the violence of the combat.

Sometimes, it may be a true and a wise way of viewing it, that your heart is a field in which two adverse parties are carrying on their external feud; that both Christ and Satan are using you for the exhibition of their power; that it is not against you, chiefly, that those attacks are levelled, and those shafts pointed, but against Christ in you; that the fierceness of the hostility is towards the actual Christ that is now in you; that He, and not you, He in you and you in Him, the powers of darkness in you hate and assail; and that they are taking you only, as it were, by the way; that against Him is the rancour, to wrong Him is the aim; and to you, that He may be wounded in you.

How pleasant the inference, how sure the resting-place, God can hold His own, God can take care of His own, He must go into the pre-eminence; and I with Him—my victory is sure!

But whether you ever adopt this view or not—and it would not be well to view it thus always—but whether you ever adopt it, you will certainly be right to recognise always, very plainly and very absolutely, the two distinct natures or powers, which now are in you as a regenerate man. Do not extenuate the sin because of the grace, and do not disparage the grace because of the sin. Here lies a double danger, and the path runs narrow between two precipices.

A few—a very few, I trust—say very presumptuously, and with awful speciousness—‘Because of the grace that is in me, I am no longer a sinner; I must not pray as a sinner, I must not feel as a sinner.’

Very many more, with a most unfilial timidity, and a most unscriptural reason, say, ‘Because I have so much sin in me, there can be no grace; I cannot believe, that, being what I find myself, I am a child of God.’

Admit both—confess to both—act upon both. There is a side, oh! how dark! all blackness; not a single pure motive ever lay in my heart; not one good act fit to be weighed in the balances of the

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sanctuary have I, ever since I was born, presented to God. Pride, selfishness, unbelief, temper, lust, disobedience, fill everything. The trail of the serpent lies on every spray of thought and feeling within my breast. 'In me dwelleth no good thing.' I am vile. That is earth's side.

Now, all praise to the glory of God's grace, turn the portrait, and see it under the falling of another light. 'He that is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.'

Understand this verse. There is a sinless nature in a believer: that new nature is the man; more strictly the man than his old nature of sin, because God sees in it: that is to be for ever and ever, and that does not sin, and that is the man. 'He that is born of God sinneth not.'

Christ in me—and that Christ in me is my being, I own no other—'Christ in me the hope of glory.' 'Know ye not, every one of you, that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?' And Christ in you, the Kingdom of Heaven is in you. Now you are 'light in the Lord,'—now ye are holy—now ye are kings and priests—now ye are complete.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Flesh *versus* the Spirit.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
GALATIANS V. 17.

I. THE intrinsic faultiness of every life.

Two courts sit in judgment upon every proposed action.

What is the matter?

Their judgments contradictory.

1. The lower animals are not constructed so.

2. Lower types of man are not so.

(The complacency of savages.)

3. Many are either dimly or not at all aware of this contradiction.

(The chronic wicked—the frivolous and shallow.)

4. It awakes and develops in highest type of man.

II. The first purpose of religion is to stir up a divine discontent!

'And so I live, you see,

Go through the world, try, prove, reject.

Prefer, still struggling to effect

My warfare; happy that I can

Be crossed and thwarted as a man,

Not left, in God's contempt, apart,

With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,

Tame in Earth's paddock as her prize.'

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III. The relation of Jesus to this fact of human life.

1. He could not escape its operation.

The Temptation.

(The 'lust of the flesh,'—for 'bread.'

The 'lust of the eye,'—for 'all the Kingdoms,' etc.

The 'pride of life,'—'cast thyself down,' etc.)

2. His gift of the Holy Spirit to reinforce the spiritual side.

S. D. M'CONNELL.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Grateful Leper.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. S. LUKE xvii. 15, 16.



THE Lord chooses His own way, and His own time, to bless us. And there is a vast difference as to our manner of receiving His blessings.

I. Now for our first lesson. It is this: that the Lord chooses His own way, and His own time, to bless us.

His heart yearned towards those ten sufferers. He longed to display His love and kindness towards them. And He might have done so at once; but He withheld His bounty for a while, and waited till they had left Him, and were fairly on their way to the house of the priests, before He bestowed His blessing. This was probably to try their faith.

And so does He sometimes act with us. Can you not remember some time in your past life, when you felt uneasy and unhappy? There was a weight that lay heavy on your mind. Jesus knew what you were suffering; and His heart went out towards you. He could have relieved you at the time.

But no, 'He waited to be gracious.' And perhaps you were somewhat impatient under your trial, and were disposed to cry out with a half-stifled murmur, like the mother of Sisera, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' And yet how much better—and how much wiser—to wait the Lord's own time; for it may be, the blessing is on its way; the deliverance will come at the proper moment. It is not when we please, but when

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He pleases. And then, when the gift is bestowed, do we not feel ashamed that we were so impatient, so distrustful?

Learn then, that although the Saviour may seem to withhold His grace, and may appear as though He heard not our prayer, and was unwilling to supply our want, He is only choosing His own time for its bestowal.

II. So much then for the way in which our Lord gives His blessings; it is sometimes after a long delay. And now let us see what the miracle teaches us, as to the manner in which men receive the Lord's gifts and blessings. There is as great difference in our conduct and feelings, as there was in the case of those lepers.

When we receive any signal mercy from the Lord, we exclaim, perhaps, 'Thank God!' There is a momentary acknowledgment, an outburst of natural feeling, but it stops there. There is no turning to God, no loving Him with a new and purer love. We draw no nearer to the Saviour. We allow Him to remain afar off.

It is sad to think that only one of them showed a really right spirit, such as we should imitate. And he was a Samaritan, a kind of Jewish dissenter—the least favoured of them all, and whose ingratitude would have been more excusable than the rest.

And now see how he acted. He is indeed a beautiful example of real Christian gratitude. There were these three marks of true thankfulness in him.

It cost him something.

There was a hearty earnestness about it.

It was accompanied by self-abasement.

Let us bear in mind, that it is not enough to be fervent in prayer at the time of our distress, as was the case with these lepers; but let us do what is far more difficult; let us return, and give hearty praise unto Him who has so graciously heard our prayers, and relieved our want.

BISHOP OXENDEN.

Where are the Nine?

Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? S. LUKE xvii. 17.

THERE is more prayer than praise in the world. It ought to be the reverse. There should be more praise than prayer. For what we have received is much more than what we want. Our mercies accumulate much faster than our necessities.

I. Before we can estimate any benefit, we need to measure it, not by the value we put upon it when we have it, but by the appreciation with which we held it when it was not.

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It is a humbling fact, that we never realise the true worth of any thing but by its absence. It will be a great part, no doubt, of final punishment, happiness absent; God gone! Oh, how precious will that thing seem then, which now looks so very ordinary. What would we not give for one moment, such as this moment we are now living, this moment with all its immensities, all its offers, all its openings, all its possibilities!

II. We are not sufficiently conscious and careful of special temptations, which have been following close in the traces, and haunting the threshold, of our great mercies. Our deliverance from trouble, our recovery from sickness, our escape from the sense of condemnation, our early gushes of religious joy, our restoration to happiness, which we thought the safest, they are the most dangerous and the most testing passages of life. All the history of the Church, from Adam in his first delicious joy in Paradise, or Noah just coming out of the ark, or Lot from Sodom, or Abraham in his entrance to the land of promise, or the Israelites at the foot of the mount, or Saul after one year's empire, or David sitting at his ease, or Solomon just getting his riches, or Elijah fresh from his great triumph, or Hezekiah risen from his sickness, on to the disciples in the Transfiguration, or SS. Peter and John at the very side of Jesus, or S. Paul descending from the third heaven,—all tell the same tale, and confirm the same truth, of the close proximity of the most dire assaults to the largest privileges; and repeating, over and over again, the lesson of the lepers.

III. You will find an explanation of the apparently impossible problem of our gross ingratitude in the fact that we very little think when any gift comes to us what it cost. Would it be so little to you, would it be so commonplace, could you pass it by so lightly, would it leave no vestige, if you remembered it is Christ who purchased it for you with His own Blood!


JAMES VAUGHAN.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Zeal without Consistency.

And he said, Come unto me and see my zeal for the Lord . . . But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart. 2 KINGS x. 19-31.

I.  DOUBT whether in these days we are not in danger of too much disparaging zeal. Zeal is the same word as fervour. In its forcible original meaning, it is the bubbling up of the boiling spirit, whether in the excitement of some human emotion, or in the jealousy of a devoted heart for God's honour. It is the opposite of an impassive, a cold-hearted and a cold-blooded indifference. It is the opposite of that disposition which can stand tamely by, while man is oppressed or God dishonoured. It is the outburst of that generous indignation which cannot endure to see right trampled underfoot by might. This is what we mean by zeal. The zeal of Jehu was of a lower order than this. This zeal can scarcely be without obedience. It is inconceivable that there should be a real, an active, a self-denying concern for God's honour and for the souls of others, where there is no care to walk watchfully before Him in holiness. We have parted company therefore with Jehu and with his direct example, when we speak of zeal in its higher and nobler workings. Yet even Jehu may reprove. We all know what the boiling up of the spirit within us is or may be: but which of us has ever known it save for himself; in the assertion of his own rights, in the vindication of his own honour? Any zeal for God, even an ignorant, even a mistaken, even a rash zeal, were better far for us than none.

II. And this brings us, in the second place, to apply to ourselves, in the way of counsel and warning, the unfavourable part of the character before us. Jehu had a zeal for God, but Jehu nevertheless took no heed to walk in God's law with all his heart.

Jehu took no heed, we take no heed, to the will of God. We think we know all about it; or we think that a little deviation will not be noticed, will not be punished, certainly will not be fatal: we admit into our lives little irregularities, into our hearts little dark places, and think that the general tenor may still be acceptable, that the general colour may not be dark but bright. And then we find,

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by bitter experience, that the beginning of sin, like the beginning of strife, is as the letting out of water, hard to restrain when it has once been suffered.

So long as ours is a grudging service, it will also be a thankless one: so long as we weigh and measure our acts for God, they will be burdensome, and they will be unproductive. Give all, and all will be happiness; because all will be unity, all will be peace. In this one sense, if in no other, the whole is less than its parts; to give a part is burdensome, to give the whole is light. Do this, and thou shalt live, was a condition of salvation too heavy for man; but thousands and tens of thousands have found rest and healing and joy in obeying the gospel call, My son, give Me thy heart!


DEAN VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Good Man's Character

His leaf also shall not wither; and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

PSALM i. 4.

- I.  HE good man is described first by negatives. What is he not?

1. He will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. If a man has no regard for God, if he shows by his words or by his actions that God is not in all his thoughts, then he cannot be a good adviser. The man who would be really happy must decline his counsel.

2. Again, the man who would be happy must not stand in the way of sinners. As some men are ungodly, so some men are sinners. As some men have not God before them, so some men live sinfully. You may not always be aware of it. You may be deceived about it for a time. But in the long-run a man of this sort will betray himself to those around him. Take heed how, in that most literal of all senses, you be found standing idle in the way of sinners!

3. But, once again, besides the dangers of walking and of standing, there is a danger also in sitting. The man who would be happy must not sit in the seat of the scornful. The Psalmist, under God's holy inspiration, knew us well. He wrote for all times, not only for his own, when he spoke of the seat of the scornful. Who is meant

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by the scornful? What is the character thus designated? It is the same which is elsewhere described as that of the scoffer. He is the man who mocks at everything, even at sin. 'O sit not thou,' the Psalmist says, 'in the seat of the scornful!' Aim not, if you love your soul, at the reputation of a censor, a jester, or a wit! More than this: avoid the seat where such men are enthroned: they will overbear your better judgment; they will insensibly lead you to think and to judge even as they.

II. These three are the good man's enemies; his, because God's. These things are what he is not; what he avoids and dreads. Now, what is he? Can we look within, and see where the secret lies, of his character, and of his life? Yes, the Psalmist goes on to say, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate,' or, as the Prayer-Book version gives it, 'exercise himself, day and night.' The Word of God is his counsellor. That advice, which he will not receive from the ungodly, he takes, and he seeks, from God Himself. His delight is in God's law, in God's Word. It is not, to him, a closed book. It is not a mere Sunday duty to read a chapter in it. No, it is his delight. 'Thy testimonies,' he can say, 'are my delight and my counsellors.' Day and night, in hours of business, of recreation, and of repose, he meditates in God's law: when he cannot be reading it, it is still dear to him, still treasured in his memory, still cherished in his heart. It guides his life, it directs his judgment, it breathes in his spirit, even when it is not in his hand, and not upon his lips.

III. And then, after reviewing the good man in these two aspects—what he is not, and what he is—what he eschews, and what he loves—we are briefly told, in the third and last place, what his course is, and what his end. 'He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' God's blessing is upon that man. There is no mistake as to his being under a divine benediction. Everything is, with him, orderly and seasonable. There is a regular process of culture and of fruit-bearing: nothing miraculous, nothing marvellous perhaps, in his condition or in his progress: we are not surprised by a sudden gathering in mid-winter, or by a harvest that precedes the sowing: we only see that, in him, as in a duly cultivated and well-watered garden, all things come in their season: the work of grace within goes on we know not how, but there is a growth, we see, a progress, and a maturity: even sorrow and affliction, like that digging and dunging of which a well-known Parable speaks, have their place in his training, and yield afterwards the peaceable fruit of righteousness in him who has been exercised thereby.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

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Divine Discouragements.

Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.
S. LUKE xvii. 10.

THE discouragements which Christ extended to men form a healthy subject of religious study. At a time when sect is competing against sect, and angling for proselytes with decorous bait, it is well to look back upon the beginning, when our Master presented no such inducements to the world of the shallow.

I. He was critical of men's language in addressing Him. If they meant something by calling Him 'good,' the name was pertinent: if they but caught up the trick of laudation, and rehearsed only what they heard, then the name was impertinent from them, however reasonable in its origin.

II. And from discouraging titles of honour or of dishonour, Christ went on to discourage the popular rhetoric of religion—the phrases that empty the mind in proportion as they occupy the mouth. For, a cry is too often, like a confession, but a waste upon externals of that moral energy which might be made available for thought and amendment within.

III. Our Master is also critical of men's logic. He will not have them accept premisses, and limit their conclusions to matters where those conclusions please, without extending them also to matters where they pain—and pain the most sensitive parts of us, our traditions and our prejudices. There is an imperativeness, He says, about human instinct. If we attend to our petty possessions on the Sabbath-day we must suffer God and the godlike to attend to their possessions, which are the suffering and the sad. There is an imperativeness in science; it cannot be circumscribed at pleasure within the bounds of the visible, 'ye know how to interpret the face of the earth, and the heaven: but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?' There is something imperative too about revelation. We dare not refuse the inference from its purposed language.

IV. But our Lord did more than object to irrelevant rhetoric, and halting logic, and questions that were not meet. He Himself volunteered discouragements of purposed severity—frosts for the ripening of immature grain. He brings an evasive character face to face suddenly with the perfect life and its demands. The young ruler might refuse the sacrifice of all that he possessed; but, Christ loving him, it was better for such a temperament that he turned away 'exceeding sorrowful' at hard conditions, than that he accepted easy

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ones and rejoiced. There is a possibility of that effort emerging from pain, which cannot emerge from contentment, and

‘a man’s reach must exceed his grasp,
Or what’s a heaven for?’

But there was no body of his fellow-men whom our Master was so plain in discouraging as His own intimates. ‘The nearer to Him, the nearer to the flame.’ Did they desire to drink of the cup prepared for the King, they should at least understand what its royal ingredients were—‘vinegar mingled with gall.’ There is a mosaic upon the roof of the Cathedral of S. Mark’s at Venice; in one compartment are the Apostles reciving the Pentecostal gifts, in another they distribute them by baptizing many nations, but beside every font stands some executioner or other waiting to claim the preacher as his eventual victim.

We accept the discipline of Jesus when we seek the company of those who discourage us rather than flatter; the friends who impute to us a capacity we have not exhausted; who prune our redundant phrases and screen us from the sunshine of compliments ‘in order that we may bring forth more fruit;’ the books that lift on high the splendid deeds of old, not extolling them as superhuman, but narrating them as deeds which are ‘common to man,’ man created in the image of God and reared by His Spirit; the books also which reveal the character of ‘the bravely dumb,’ who saw nothing wonderful in their own virtue, nothing deserving posthumous honour, who deemed that ‘man should live according to his nature during the few years which have been given him upon earth, and when the moment of departure has come, submit himself with sweetness, like an olive which in falling blesses the tree which has produced it.’ A fellowship with such friends, living and dead, makes for humility, but it is a humility which is a form of self-reverence, which is a protest against the vanity that sets a high estimate upon our actions, because it holds a mean estimate of our powers.

May we dare greatly in the persuasion of infinite energies! May we persist to the end in spite of infinitesimal results! May we know ourselves to be the bondmen of duty, and may we be comforted with the fair vision of the smile upon its face.

B. H. ALFORD.

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VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

God's Spirit. IT is not for men to make channels for God's Spirit, as
GAL. v. 16. they make channels for the water-courses, and say, 'Flow here, but flow not there.'

The Help of the Spirit. IT is not said (Rom. viii. 26) that 'the Spirit helps us' with comforts and with joys, but with sighs and 'groans';
GAL. v. 16. He helps us in sensible complaints of our wants, as well as in holy ravishments. Strength of grace is seen in holy joys; but truth of grace may be seen in sighs and groans.

The Workings of the Spirit. MARK the rain that falls from above; for the same shower that dropped out of one cloud, increaseth sundry plants in a garden; and, severally, according to the condition of each plant. In one stalk it renders a rose, in another a violet, divers in a third, and sweet in all. So the Spirit works its multiformous effects in several complexions, and all according to the increase of God

Christian Fruits. THE last best fruit which comes to late perfection, even in the kindest, is, tenderness towards the hard, forbearance towards the unforbearing, warmth of heart towards the cold, philanthropy towards the misanthropic.
GAL. v. 22.

Fruit-bearing for Other's Sake. FRUIT-BEARING trees spend not all their sap and moisture upon themselves, or the increase of their own magnitudes; but the principal and purer part of it is concocted into some pleasant fruits whereof neither they nor their young sprigs ever come to taste; but they proffer it us, and when it is ripe, they voluntarily let it fall at their master's feet. Never did the olive anoint itself with its own oil, nor the vine make itself drunk with its own grapes, nor the fig-tree devour its own figs; yet they all strive to abound with fruits. . . . If happiness consisted in doing nothing, God who meant Adam to be so happy would never have set him about business; but as Paradise was his store-house, so also his work-house; his pleasure was his task (Gen. ii. 15). There is no state of man that can privilege a folded hand. In Paradise all things did labour for man; now man must labour for all things (Gen. ii. 9; iii. 17-19). Adam did work because he was happy; we, his children, must work

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that we may be happy. Heaven is for joys, hell for pains, earth for labour. Oh, then, let us be fruitful, that others' benefit may be ours, our benefit theirs, and the glory of all the Lord's.

Signs of Fruit. A SHEEP does not show she has had a good pasture by throwing up the grass she has eaten, but in that she has well digested it, and has wool and milk in plenty; so do you in the same manner not boast your reading to fools, but show by the actions that follow a true improvement, that you have read and profited.

Gratitude. GRATITUDE was fancifully said to be the memory of the heart; but alas! poor human nature, hearts are more than suspected of having wondrously short memories.

Gratitude. OH! how amiable is gratitude! especially when it has the Supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's-self. But the exercise of gratitude subsisted in Paradise when there was no fault to deplore, and will be perpetuated in heaven when 'God shall be all in all.'

A DEAF and dumb pupil of the Abbé Sicard, on being asked what he understood by the word 'gratitude,' wrote down immediately, 'Gratitude is the memory of the heart.'

WE may use the words of Socrates to his scholar, who saw in the contemplation of nature only a proof of his own insignificance, and concluded 'that the gods had no need of him,' which drew this answer from the sage: 'The greater the munificence they have shown in the care of thee, so much the more honour and service thou owest them.'

A GENTLEMAN of fortune, but a stranger to personal religion, one evening took a solitary walk through part of his grounds. He happened to come near a mean hut, where a poor man lived with a numerous family, who earned their bread by daily labour. He heard a continued and pretty loud voice. Not knowing what it was, curiosity prompted him to listen. The man happened to be at prayer with his family. He heard him giving thanks to God for the goodness of His providence in giving them food to eat and raiment to put on, and in supplying them with what was necessary and comfortable in

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the present life. He was struck with astonishment and confusion, and said to himself, 'Does this poor man, who has nothing but the meanest fare, and that purchased by severe labour, give thanks to God for His goodness to himself and family, and I, who enjoy ease and honour, and everything that is pleasant and desirable, have hardly ever bent my knee, or made any acknowledgment to my Maker and Preserver?' This occurrence was the means of bringing him to a real sense of religion.

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

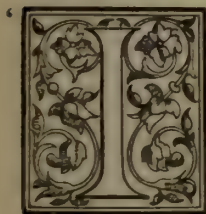
Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	GAL. VI. 11-18.
GOSPEL,	S. MATT. VI. 24-34.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	2 KINGS XVIII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	2 KINGS XIX. OR XXIII. TO VER. 31.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Take no Thought for the Morrow.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. S. MATTHEW vi. 34.



‘WOULD have you without carefulness,’ was S. Paul’s fatherly wish for his Corinthian converts. And it is a very large class everywhere—careful Christians. Rather I would say, how exceedingly rare a thing it is to find one religious person who is realising all the security, and living in all the joyousness of one who is resting in all his works for time and for eternity, upon omnipotent love.

Here and there it has been my privilege to know one. But that one has generally been a very poor person.

And yet, what is all this carefulness about? Is it not a canker, which eats deep into your religion, which hinders every prayer, weakening your hands for every duty, and sullyng every thought? Is not it a darkening humour, which rises up and casts a gloom; shrouding every faculty of your mind; making your highest privilege,

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ay, and your highest happiness, seen through a cloud of petty anxieties, dim and distant? Is it not a grievous wrong to that heavenly Father of yours, who would look upon the face of His child, and see in its quiet gladness a reflection of His own felicity?

Now, as one great secret of an uncareful mind, our Lord has laid down this broad principle, that we should live every day within the day; making, as much as possible, its little horizon the boundary line, beyond which no prospect is to go forward, and no retrospect is to go backward.

The little birds live so. So God fed Elijah. The manna in the wilderness taught this truth. And our blessed Lord's life upon the earth was singularly one in which the provision was exceedingly small, and the calculations were very few.

But here the question naturally arises, Is not the Christian character essentially a provident one? Is it not the very nature of the new life, which is within us, that, taking all its interests and affections out of the present, as it passes, it throws them on to that which is coming, and always is living in the future? Are we not taught to hold nothing important but that which lies before us; and to account the days and hours, as they fly by, as a very little thing?

All this is perfectly true; and perhaps the very habit of a Christian's mind, in looking always onwards, has a tendency to make his temperament anxious. In his wakeful disposition, it becomes doubly difficult to go on, without this forecast and doubt. Every duty has its dangers; every height has its precipice; every light has its shadow.

But all this is only true of an early and imperfect religion. As a believer grows, his 'to-morrow' becomes more and more eternity. He is so conscious that he is always walking on the margin of another world; he so delights to feel that world before him, that all the interval that lies between him, be it long or short, is just as it were a parenthesis. He goes along the side of the valley; and he looks across to the mountains on the other side. He looks at them, till they begin to seem to him always closer and closer. Life seems to him to be but as a little space before the break of day, and the dawn of eternity.

And this is the very man who stands in the attitude, according to the divine Master's instruction, of the to-morrows of this present life: the remnant of his existence, with all its anticipations, is absorbed in the all-absorbing consideration of eternity—eternity.

So it comes to pass, that the very forethought of the Christian, which becomes the law and condition of his being, turns into the remedy for every unhappy disposition; and he 'takes no thought for

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the morrow,' being engrossed in the thought of that never-ending eternity which lies before him.

Now, God's great intention concerning every one of us is, that we should be kept in a state of continual happy dependence on Him, in order that we may be humbled and mortified every moment. Therefore He will never allow you so to pass any moment of your life, that you should be independent of Him any other moment of your life.

The builders of the Tower of Babel attempted to do that. Nebuchadnezzar was for doing it, when he looked out from his palace and said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' The fool in the parable did it, when he said, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'

All these, and many others, were for making a provision for 'the morrow.' And you remember what folly, and what misery, and what judgment God wrought upon it all!

But God would have you—every day, and every hour, and every moment, absolutely hanging upon Him for supply, for guidance, for grace, for peace, for life, and all that makes life worth the living.

Your breath is to be faith; your food, the promises; your strength, your union with Christ; and your life, the fact that Christ lives, and that He lives for ever.

Hence, God does not act with you, as we often act. He does not give you once for all an impulse, which is to carry you on all the rest of your appointed course; but He undertakes to help you, by fresh and fresh acts of grace. They shall come, moment by moment, to the very moment of your death. That is Isaiah's beautiful prayer—'O Lord, be thou their arm every morning.'

God does not inspire your mind with one great universal wisdom, and then leave you; but He gives you the right of momentary access to Himself; and then He says, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'

He does not render you by a fiat self-sufficient for all your difficulties; but He secures you by a promise, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.'

He does not pledge Himself to your fancies; but He allows me now to say to you, 'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

He does not fill your basket and your store with a complement for the journey; but He puts into your hand a small cruse, and a little barrel; and then He undertakes, and He says, 'Seek ye first the

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kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Now all this is done, to drive us to live by the day: to let the day's affairs fill the day's thoughts.

And here let us stop for a moment, and see the benefit of it.

And, first, as respects our pleasures. If I understand it, the way to enjoy anything, is to hold it graspingly; look at it intently, and to dwell on it undistractedly.

Now we do not say, but that every present pleasure of the Christian is immensely enhanced by the light and joy which are thrown back upon it, from the happiness which is yet to come. Just as snow-clad mountains in the distance give a distinctness in the nearer prospect, so every child of God knows well how the joy is heightened, by the privilege of not having to dilute it, by anxiety for any future good. For how often have we felt some very pleasant thing shaded, almost embittered, by the recollection that will come, 'There are other events coming on in quick succession.' So that no one seems to me to have learnt the art of really enjoying anything, who has not learnt it in God's school.

How can a man enjoy his family, how can a man enjoy society, or, how can a man enjoy solitude, who has his mind disturbed about the future? This seems to be the fountain of all happiness—'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

Or look at the same truth again, as respects your pains. Who does not know that that which makes the painfulness of any pain is the thought that that pain will continue? Very few pains are there, either of mind or of body, which would not be quite tolerable, if we thought that that moment's pain was all we had to endure. It is the sorrow and the pain which are coming, which are so hard to bear. The unknown, and the undefined, are always the largest weights; in the same proportion, suspense is always the greatest of evils. So that he has well-nigh found a panacea, who has thoroughly imbued his mind with the truth, 'Take no thought for the morrow.'

Or, once more, look at duties. The secret of doing anything well, is concentration. Every student knows that, every man of the world knows that. But what thoughtful man can really concentrate, when he has a future unprovided for? See, for instance, how one peculiar embarrassment, how one family trouble, incapacitates a man for enterprise. Who can do duties thoroughly, who can be free enough, be perfectly concentrated, who can be at ease, but the man who feels that he has nothing that is not provided for, in time and eternity, and all covenanted to work together for his good?

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Now, let us look then, how the matter stands between a believer and all evil.

Now do not misunderstand me, God does not say that any one shall not be conversant with evil. Rather this passage lays it down clearly, every day as it falls—some days more, some less—but every day comes in, charged with the load of evil, it pleases our heavenly Father to put. But evils there will be—evils in our thoughts; evils in the circumstances around; positive evil; negative evil; social evil; moral evil; evil from the hand of God; and worse evil from the hand of man. Weakness, and sin, and temptation, and falls, and many sorrows, keener for another's anguish than our own. But 'sufficient for every day is the evil thereof.'

Meet life every morning as an evil thing. Prepare yourself for the day coming before you, as an evil thing. Look back upon the day past, as an evil thing. But for this very reason, because it is so evil, let it stand by itself.

Look at this especially about your sins. Every Christian is, or ought to be, in that state respecting his sins, that he has nothing to do except with the sins of the current day. As soon as he was converted he was justified; in other words, the very time when he first felt real faith and repentance, all the sins which he had ever committed from his childhood, up to that period, were freely, and fully, and perfectly cancelled. He was washed—clean as snow. From that time, he 'needeth not save to wash his feet.'

Each day, therefore, he brings the guilt which he has been accumulating since last he prayed, and lays it at the foot of the Cross, to be cleansed in the same fountain. But this is all he has to do with it. It needs not to be passed to a current account; for a debt once paid is never again due. Neither need he be thinking of the sins and transgressions into which he may, and into which he will fall again—because to-morrow's guilt will find to-morrow's grace. He has only to feel penitently, and cast the day's burden where, surely, alone it can be laid—where the burden of other days has been cast.

Oh! what a happy lot is theirs, who having nothing between them and God but the sins of the day; who, knowing the past is all forgiven, and that they have the same grace to fall back upon when it is needed, can say, 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

And as it is with your sins, so it is with all your cares and anxieties. You know how apt the mind is to see coming troubles, all gathering themselves into one great focus, which looks impossible, simply, because it is seen all at once. The far-off hill is always steep; and he who stands in the sunshine, sees the cloud the blackest, as it lies spread over the distance.

But we have learnt that the trouble which comes, is very generally

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not the trouble which we expected, and when it comes, it does not come as it looked—all at once, in one intolerable mass; but it comes grain by grain; drop by drop; measuredly; a little here; a little there; something to-day, something to-morrow; and each moment made quite equal to carry its own proper weight, if we do not put to-morrow's portion into to-day's cup.

It will be a sweet, a prevailing argument with God, every moment, 'O Lord, think of me this day—for this is that to-morrow, of which thou didst command me not to think!'

And as you do this, the yesterdays will become memory's witnesses to God's mind; and the to-morrows will be fields for faith's peaceful exercise.


Living within each day, you will be at leisure for its sorrows; or its obligations; or its joys: to bear the pain, or the disappointment uncomplainingly; to throw your whole soul into the duty which presses; and to fling wide open to your delight the doors of ecstasy. And He will be honoured, who planned the map of your destinies, when He beholds your mind confirmed to the chart, because your heart is reposing on the wisdom of the Planner!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Glory of the Cross.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. GAL. vi. 14.

- I.  HERE is a use of the word *Cosmos* in Scripture to which the test of its crucifixion by the cross perfectly answers. This is the *cosmos* not of nature and not of man as God created either; not the beautiful universe in which philosopher, and poets, and simple loving souls which are neither, delight to revel and expatiate; not the race made in God's image, partaking of His intelligence, and His forethought, and His sympathy, and His love, and even in its ruins prognosticating reconstruction; but that aspect, that element, of each which sin has defiled: matter as the foe of spirit, and man as the bond-slave of the devil. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, this is the world. To have these things in the heart is to be worldly. This is the disease, the

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threefold disease, which Christ came to heal when He undertook the cure of worldliness.

II. In the crucifixion by the cross there are two stages.

1. There is, first, a testimony. The Cross is a witness. It gives evidence against the world. The Cross is evidence against the vanity of worldliness; bids the man who would be a man do battle for the thing that is, and look for his reward to a world not of shadows and to a life not of time.

2. The Cross is a power too. That ugly, that repulsive, that horrible object, that frightful, that revolting execution, that gibbet accursed of God and man, has become the magnet of humanity. Christ foretold it, and it is true. Wheresoever the Gospel of the Cross and the Crucified is preached, there are found practical evidences—‘infallible proofs’ S. Luke would call them—of the power of the Cross to crucify men to the world. Not by trickery or magic, not by accident or machinery, but by the Spirit of the living God, is this influence upon hearts and lives wrought. Christ crucified becomes in His turn the mutual Crucifier of man and the world.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Crucifying the World.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. GAL. vi. 14.

THERE were some of the first Christians who felt ashamed of the death to which their Master had been put. Not so S. Paul. To him it seemed altogether glorious. For him the Cross was the central feature, the dominant figure in all human history. He gloried in it above all things. It seemed to the world unutterably shocking and shameful. To him it seemed the most splendid thing in all the universe. It was a tremendous object-lesson of the love of God. It was the great power of God unto salvation. It was the means by which Christ would draw all men unto Him. Its outstretched arms would gather in the whole world. He foresaw how it would ‘tower o’er the wrecks of time,’ how ‘all the light of sacred story would gather round its head sublime.’ All his views of life and death and eternity were influenced by the Cross. It seemed never to be absent from his thoughts.

I. When, therefore, he undertook to define his relations to the world, he could only see them in the light of the Cross, he could not think of them apart from the great transaction upon Calvary, he could only describe them in terms of the Cross. His language is somewhat

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foreign to the spirit of our age, but it is the mother tongue of the Christian heart. His words are strikingly vivid and significant.

Looking first upon the world's side of those relationships, he exclaims, 'The world is crucified unto me.' What does He mean by that?

II. When Christ hung upon the Cross, the world thought it was condemning and crucifying Him. It was really condemning and crucifying itself. It was the world that led Him to the Cross and hung Him there, that drove the cruel nails, that challenged Him to come down from the Cross, that surged round its base and gloried in His shame. It was the world, not the Christ, who was on trial, who was condemned, who was eternally disgraced that day. S. Paul sees with the eye of faith, over against the three crosses of Calvary another cross, a towering shameful cross on which a wicked world has hung itself, dishonoured, disgraced, doomed. He can never forget that his Lord 'was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.' It hated Him, rejected Him, did its best to destroy Him utterly. It strove to judge Him, but only judged itself. It convicted itself of the most awful wrongs which were ever done in heaven or earth. Since that day S. Paul could only think of the world as a self-condemned criminal gibbeted before the eyes of angels and men, a culprit whose base and bloody sin has found him out and brought its due reward, a malefactor whose evil purposes have been exposed, and who is no longer to be feared. Henceforth, he regarded it, and feared it no more than a condemned criminal writhing on a cross. The world was crucified to him.

But more. He was 'crucified to the world.' He was on the Cross with Christ. He viewed the world from the standpoint of the Cross of Christ. It had lost its charms, forfeited its claims. Its glamour was gone; he had nothing more to hope or to fear from it; he had done with the world. What did he care for its pleasures, its prizes, its good opinion, its success, or its scorn? What could it offer to him who gloried in the Cross of Christ, and believed it to be the throne of glory everlasting? The world was for ever crucified to him, and he to the world.

Strong and shocking as S. Paul's language may seem to us, it was perfectly true. The world did crucify Christ, and it would do so again, if He came amongst us in the flesh to-day.

III. It is the same world, only a little better for nineteen centuries of Christianity. The only point from which the Christian can see it in its true light is the Cross of Calvary. If he is a true Christian, he must see it from there. He is crucified with Christ. He cannot forget the attitude of the world towards the Cross, cannot forget

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that the world made the Cross. He looks down from his cross of glory where he hangs with Christ and sees the world on its cross, its cross of shame, and he would not change places for all that the world has to give. He glories in his cross.

Have we learned so to do? Are we looking at the world from the vantage-ground of the Cross? We must learn to do so, if we are to be joint-heirs with Christ in the triumphs He has won. We must identify ourselves with Him and look at the world from his point of view—the highest, the truest, the best standpoint from which to estimate its real worth. Let us earnestly beseech God to give us the spirit of S. Paul, to open our eyes, so that we may see how true it is that in the eternal Sacrifice of the Cross the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. WYLLYS REDE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Neutrality.

No man can serve two masters. S. MATTHEW vi. 24.



LET us consider, first, the characteristics of neutrality, next its causes, and lastly its issue.

I. Take that mightiest of Christian teachers, the poet Dante. When he has passed through the black and rocky gate of hell he comes to a region where horrible outcries, tones of anguish, accents of rage, voices deep and hoarse, and smitten hands, make a tumult which sounds through that turbid and murky air; he asks Virgil who those wretches were. He is told they are the dreary souls of those who lived indeed without infamy, yet without praise, mingled with the caitiff crew of angels who were neither rebels against God nor faithful to Him, but were only for themselves. Heaven chased them forth because they would have soiled her beauty; hell itself spurns them as even more despicable than the wicked, the world has forgotten their blind, greedy, nameless, selfish lives; mercy and justice alike disdain them. So he sees them, swept for ever round the utmost confines of hell in numbers so numberless that he could not have believed that death could have undone so many; and they follow the giddy flutterings of the flag of Acheron, a crew of caitiffs hateful to God and to His enemies, abject, naked, stung by wasps and hornets, and their faces smeared with blood and with tears. Could there be a more

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scornful picture of those who are dead but who have never lived, the selfishly neutral, the greedily callous in the great unceasing conflict between good and evil, the trimmers and shufflers, the half-and-half people who do not care for the approbation of God, but for what the world says, or who, having sold themselves for the indulgence of their meanest vices, are condemned to punishments as mean and paltry as their lives.

II. But, secondly, since we have seen the characteristics, what are the causes of these deplorable attempts at double-mindedness; this endeavour, in the worst sense, to make the best of both worlds, this double-mindedness? The causes are mainly two: indolence and unbelief. On the one hand, men do not try to grapple with the problem of their own faith. Finding it inconvenient with their aims and desires, they content themselves with the thing they call Agnosticism, which often means nothing in the world except that they will not trouble themselves to make up their own minds about questions which of all others are the most tremendous and the most pressing. The other and no less fatal form of this infidelity is that which professes God with the lips but denies Him in the heart. Of every form of neutrality, of all hypocrisy whether conscious or unconscious, the worst and commonest cause is some besetting sin, some bosom-transgression which seems to have become a part of the very nature.

III. Lastly, what is the end of a life which is thus only half sincere? Terrible to say, it can only end in one thing, unless it be broken off and abandoned, and that one thing is spiritual death. 'She that liveth in pleasure,' says Scripture, 'is dead while she liveth.' Are there no such living dead here? The dead who have died lie in hundreds beneath us; may there not be hundreds of dead who are living all around us? The poet saw in the lowest hell the soul of the friar Alberigo, and was amazed, because he knew that the man was still alive, and he asks for an explanation: he receives the awful answer that sometimes a man seems to live above, and eat and drink and sleep and put on clothes, but in reality his soul has sunk down even in his lifetime into the abyss. He has become that most fearful kind of ghost, not a soul without a body, but a body without a soul.

DEAN FARRAR.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The Death of Josiah.

2 KINGS xxiii. 29, 30.



IN his days Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Meggido, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre.'

If you would see the greatness of Josiah, you must look at the history of his life, not at the account which we have of his death. If the text of this sermon had been the only notice of Josiah you would not have known that he was different from, or better than, other men of his time; you might have grieved over his death, and pitied one who seemed to fall so far short in glory of Solomon and others of the kings. But no, Josiah's reign was a most glorious one, more glorious I should say than Solomon's. He won for himself an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and having done this it mattered little whether it was a fever, or old age, or the sword of Pharaoh-Nechoh, who was the messenger to call him away.

And therefore I think that the text may be very instructive to us as a picture of the manner in which God sometimes calls His servants away when they have done their work. When I read in Holy Scripture of a man who like Josiah found his kingdom in confusion, and idolatry rampant, and false altars raised, and crime and pollution abundant, and when I read of him as setting himself to the work of purification with all his heart and with all his soul, I seem to read a parable describing the condition of each true member of Christ.

Josiah's kingdom could not have been worse than the heart of each of us if left to itself, and he made it his business to cleanse his kingdom, even as each one of us, if he fulfils his promises, is bound to put out of his heart all that is unclean, all that maketh a lie, all that exalteth itself against God.

And the moral which I desire to draw from the text is this, that he who does his work in the proper time, who does not put off till old age the work of youth, nor to the hour of death the labour of life, may be quiet and unconcerned of the way in which God is


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pleased to call him ; if he is called by some sudden providence when engaged in his work, or summoned by some speedy sickness, or in whatever way God may take him, he may be of good cheer and of a quiet mind, knowing that God will do all things well.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. S. MATTHEW vi. 22.

I.  IN a time of strongly conflicting ideas and aims, and I suppose that our own is such a time, there are obvious and special dangers, very subtle but very formidable, to wise and faithful thinking, from the mere fact of the world being divided roughly at such a time into two great camps, of the old and new. Whatever line a man takes, whether he attacks or defends, whether he accepts what is received as ancient and common, or is dissatisfied with it, and devotes himself to criticism, to discovery, to the reconstruction or overthrow of what he finds established, or the substitution of something better in its place, in either case he is exposed to temptations, moral temptations, quite independent of the goodness and badness of his cause, but greatly affecting the habits of his mind, the course of his thoughts, the character of his judgments. The history of every great controversy, of every great revolution, of every great reform, proves this. I do not doubt that the history of the greatest of all revolutions, that Divine Reform of all things which came with the gospel, would, if we knew its earlier portion better, exhibit and prove it also. I have no doubt that not on one side only, but on both we should find below the great public cause, personal feelings, private motives, individual differences of characters, helping to determine men's choice of their position. The mere fear and dislike of change, the aversion from possibly indefinite trouble, the natural slowness of most of us to imagine that things can be different from what we have been accustomed to, the sense of what we actually have, the impatience of doubt, of perplexity, of importunate questioning, where we can see no need for them ; all these are strong forces on the side of what is old, whatever it may be. But not less strong on the side of novelty and

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attack is the mere enthusiasm of change, the sympathy with enterprise, the spur to the imagination of the possibilities of hitherto unthought-of improvement, the impatience, in eager and sanguine natures, of that which keeps others back, the scorn of pretexts and apologies, the pleasure of the difficulty and the strife, the *gaudia certaminis*, the end forgotten in the interest of the fighting, the keen satisfaction of feeling one's-self original, and bold, and adventurous, nay even of startling others, by our strong and fearless words. No man, I suppose, has ever gone through days of controversy, without observing in himself and in others, the presence and the mischief of a bias quite outside the subject of dispute, and every man who cares for the interest of truth will wish, though it may be in vain, that his own experience might help others to be on their guard-against these subtle and constant forces, which, in every controversy of whatever nature, gives a certain drift to men's minds, like the unfelt currents of the sea, which sweep the ship stealthily and unawares out of its course.

So much may be said of most questions which divide men. But there are deeper and graver dangers besetting those religious problems which have come to the front in our days, and which some of us are called to think out. No one can speak of them without remembering that perhaps he himself is an instance of the many faults which he condemns. What he sees all around him, what he sees in those from whom he differs, he may suspect in himself and in his own side. But not the least effective sermons are those which a man preaches, if not against himself, yet with the full consciousness of his own temptations and mistakes. And no one I think can be desirous to be true to truth, can value that 'freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom,' which ought according to great authority to be the aim and fruit of all our education, without having disquieting thoughts as to the way in which the highest subjects of human interest are sometimes dealt with.

II. To take one point. A great conflict is going on between Christianity, and ideas and beliefs which would destroy or supplant it. We look on, we cannot help it, for the world is full of it; we follow with interest the turns of the battle; we pass judgment on the skill of the combatants. It is conducted with ability, with courtesy, with feeling, with conviction, and purpose. We remark on the improved character of the discussion; the times at least of Voltaire, we observe with satisfaction, are past. But with all the literary power, and all the real and often pathetic earnestness shown in it, there is wanting often, as it seems to me, an adequate sense of the full issues raised by it, a sense of what in fact depends on it. I do not think, at any rate, that the majority of those who follow this

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tremendous debate reflect, or in any degree realise, what is involved in victory or defeat. It is not victory or defeat for a mere philosophical theory or criticism. It is not a question of something in prospect and at a distance, something to be developed in time, something which raises the possibility of a future policy, retards or brings near a future change in institutions. It is a present, instant result. If the opponents of Christianity are right, if the victory lies with them, it is much more than that Christians are mistaken, as men have been mistaken about science, about principles of government, about the policy or the economy of a state. It means that in religion now, as widely as men are living and acting, all that is now, is false, rotten, wrong. Our present hopes are utterly extinguished. Our present notions are as unsubstantial as bubbles on water. We are living in a dream. We are wasting on an idol the best love, the highest affections, the purest tenderness which can dwell in human hearts.

When our Lord was upon earth, He bade men follow Him; the spell of His presence drew them and they followed without delay. We are separated from those days by the quarrels, the mistakes, the doubts, the crimes and scandals of many centuries. Men must often seek truth now amid uncertainties and perplexities, amid clashing opinions and loud challenges. How do we believe that He would wish them to behave? Would not He, who sympathises with every trial and distress of man, who to all who labour and are heavy laden opens the refuge of His consoling arms—would not He wish us to guard carefully the processes of intellectual work, to recognise its great place and function, and to keep it uncorrupt and pure; not to shrink from its full play, but to be watchful over the heart and its temptations? May we not read His lessons to an age like ours in those words in which the old Hebrew Masters of the conduct of human life described the excellencies and the pursuit of what they called wisdom, and what we call practical truth: its aim, its course, its difficulties, its reward? ‘Even from the flower till the grape was ripe’—this is their language—‘my heart hath delighted in her, from my youth up I sought her. My soul hath wrestled with her, and in my doings I was exact. I stretched forth my hands unto heaven above, and bewailed my ignorance of her. I directed my soul unto her, and found her in pureness. I have had my heart joined with her from the beginning; therefore shall I not be forsaken. My heart was troubled in seeking her: therefore have I gotten a good possession.’

I should be disloyal to Him whom I believe in and worship as the Lord of Truth, if I doubted that such seeking would at last find Him. Even if it do not find Him here, man’s destiny stops not at the grave, and many, we may be sure, will know Him there who did

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not know Him here. Be those stages what they may, as rough, as strange, as prolonged as they often seem to be, true and earnest seeking cannot be in vain. They will lead the honest and good heart to the truth and at last to the light it longs for. They will lead to Him who has the secret and the cure of human blindness as of human sin. They will lead to Him who has the key to every burdened soul, who hears the unuttered desire of every imprisoned spirit. None but He can help them. None but He can give them what they want. And they who shall seek shall find. At least, let us who believe in Him be patient, during this short waiting time of an endless life. Those whom He first called had more to endure. They had against them all the appearances of their time: they had against them more than we have, the opinion of society, the deepest and the lightest. But they were not moved. For they believed, as we believe, in one who shall come to decide all controversies, who will reconcile all contradictions, and dispel all ambiguities, and light up all dark things. In His own time, He—and none but He can—will solve the riddle of life: and then ‘we,’ as S. Paul says, ‘we shall know, even as we are known.’

‘Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently in Him.’ ‘Hope in the Lord, and keep His way,’ ‘The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.’ ‘Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.’ ‘The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.’ The voice of the Bible is surely also the voice of reason. Only let us do our part now, not as children but as men. Only—to go back to where I began—let us have no sin against light and truth on our conscience, when we are on our death-bed.

DEAN CHURCH.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Glory. THE best kind of glory is that which is reflected from
GAL. VI. 14. honesty, such as was the glory of Cato and Aristides; but it was harmful to them both, and is seldom beneficial to any man whilst he lives.

Our Glory. WHAT more glorious master than God? What better
GAL. VI. 14. mother than the Church? How glorious is that calling that at once serves such a master and such a mother! As it is our

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glory to serve them, so it must be our glory to do them good service. God in us sets the world copies of piety, and we must live to others no less than preach. As we are more eye, so we are more looked at; motes in others' eyes are beams in ours. Many things are lawful that are not expedient. That which is reprobable in another is in us reproach; seeing it is so, what manner of men ought we to be?

Persecution. No servant of Christ is without affliction. If you expect
GAL. VI. 12. to be free from persecution, you have not yet so much as begun to be a Christian.

Mammon. MAMMON wins his way where seraphs might despair.
S. MATT. VI. 24.

Serving God and Mammon. No man can serve God and the world; but he may serve God with the world. The world's slaves can never be
S. MATT. VI. 24. God's free men.

Righteousness. It was a well-known saying among the Jews, that if two
S. MATT. VI. 33. men only were to be saved, one certainly would be a scribe, and the other a Pharisee. Certainly, unless our righteousness exceed theirs, we shall never come to heaven; but how shall we escape the nethermost hell if our unrighteousness exceed theirs?

Faithfulness knows no distinction between small and great duties. There is no final strength but in righteousness.

Man's Righteousness. WHEREAS God's righteousness is one, and perfect, and infinite, man's righteousnesses are various in degree and
S. MATT. VI. 32. kind, and that because they are but rays from the glory of that Uncreated Light, the Just One.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

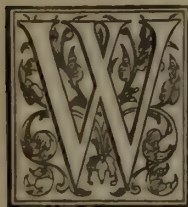
Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS III. 13-21.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE VII. 11-17.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, .	2 CHRONICLES XXXVI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, .	NEHEMIAH I. AND II. TO VER. 9 OR NEHEMIAH VIII.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

God's Love for Men.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. EPHESIANS iii. 14-19.



WHEN the Apostle once got fairly before his mind the fact that God feels a deep love for men, he was filled with amazement. It is a fact hard to believe and still harder to realise. Yet it is the starting-point of Christianity. It is the very core of the revelation of Jesus. His declaration that God is love has changed the temper and life of every man and every community which has come to believe that what he said was true. It has been a thousand times more potent to produce right living than had been the previous belief that God is power. That is to say, love is more potent than law; and this is the essence of the gospel. It is hard to believe it, for the

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facts seem to be against it. A ruler or a law can compel a certain course of action in those who come under them, and can compel it at once, whereas the affection of the ruler may be thrown away upon unworthy subjects, producing no results. Love seems weak unless force will clear the way for it, and hold its object down while love works its will upon him. Nevertheless, Jesus insists that God Himself is so constituted that He can never rest content until He shall have won for Himself the affection of all His creatures. He cannot compel this by force of any sort or in any sphere. Jesus uncovers the love of God for men, and allows it to work. He has serene confidence that in the end it will win an answering affection in every human soul. It may work by very sharp methods; for love can be cruel to be kind. But, according to Jesus, the object which God sets before Himself is not to break a recalcitrant will, or compel an obedience to His orders, but to draw all men to Himself. This theme is constantly played upon in the New Testament. It is the fact which is constantly appealed to as a motive. Whenever in any case it is accomplished, God's purpose is thought of as having been in that case secured. There may be much still to be desired in the life of a man who 'has fallen in love with God,' but there is no anxiety about the issue of such a life. A force is at work in it which will ultimately bring all the outlying discords of it into harmony.

'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'

'For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.'

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.'

Now, I have dwelt at some length upon this truth, not because I have been anxious to convince you that it is true, for I have no doubt you all assent to it in the abstract, but because I want it to sink into your minds until it awakens the doubt which always springs up concerning it whenever it becomes fairly grasped. That God loves men is likely to be believed just until one sees what the statement involves, and then it is seriously questioned. I think it well to start these questionings into life in order that we may dispose of them.

I. The first cause of difficulty is one's sense of his own insignificance as an individual atom in the universe of existence! That God

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should have some feeling, on a grand scale, toward humanity as a whole, does not sound unreasonable. But then think how many men there are, and have been, and will be. They are numbered by myriads. When one tries to bring the multitude before his imagination he becomes bewildered. Now, can we seriously think of God having a distinct and separate affection for each? But if this be not the fact, then His 'love for men' becomes a mere phrase not worth contending about. I hesitate to think that God cares for me as an individual, one way or another, that I am anything more to Him than an unnoticed unit in the great whole of things which He rules by fixed laws.

II. A still greater difficulty arises out of the fact of human unloveliness. We think of things being loved which are loveable. But men, taking them as a whole, are not very lovely. Even among one's own acquaintances, there are only a few who are even interesting, and very few indeed who inspire affection. Then think of the great mass who seem to exist for no special purpose. Stop for a little while at a corner on a fair and busy afternoon, and look at the crowds hurrying by. If you watch them steadfastly, they will, after a little, come to seem as automata, creatures driven by a purposeless restlessness. Look at their faces. Most are empty of expression, or else have an eager look which is still more forbidding. You can see that many are vicious, most are stolid. Their lives are narrow, their interests are petty, they awake no interest and provoke no love. This is the invariable impression produced upon one whose duty or office leads him to deal with multitudes. The public official, the clerk in a public office, the salesman in a great store, any one, in short, who comes personally in contact with multitudes of people for a considerable period of time, comes to have a sort of contempt for humanity. He has seen too much of it. Its foibles and petty faults have been before such a person so long that he has ceased to feel kindly. He has discovered the unloveliness of men.

Then call to mind that the humanity with which we are familiar, and which fails to touch our affection, is the best in existence. If you take in as well the millions of narrow-browed, dull, brutal people who toil in mines or hide in city slums; the worn-out, but still vicious millions of the Orient; the millions of semi-bestial savages in the Dark Continent and the isles of the sea—the average of the race falls so unspeakably low that it becomes of the utmost difficulty to conceive of God as even keeping it in mind, much less keeping in His love the individuals who compose it!

III. But there is a third difficulty far more formidable still. That is, the fact of human pain. If it be true that God loves His children,

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why does He leave them to suffer so? This has been the dark mystery of the ages. It has led men to atheism. It has led them to attribute to God the qualities of the devil. It has driven them in frantic despair to curse God and die. It has led men to grovel before God in the abject attitude of slaves before an Oriental despot. It has led them to throw their children into the flames for Moloch, to propitiate an angry deity by the costliest gifts. It leads many among us to think of a Law, instead of a Person, at the centre of things, so impassible is it, so indifferent to the cries of human agony.

Now, all these facts of human life S. Paul looks squarely in the face, and yet bursts out in praise of the goodness and loving-kindness of God. Why does he do so? What new light has he upon the 'painful riddle of life'? Why is his opinion concerning the disposition of God of any more value than that of another man? I ask you, then, to notice that he does not give his dictum as an opinion at all. It is not anything which he has thought out, or discovered, or reached by any method common among men. Jesus had said not long before that any one who saw Him would see the Father. There were some who did see Him. Not all who looked at Him, for many looked at Him without seeing or recognising Him for what He was, but some did. Among these was S. Paul. This sight of God in the face of Jesus Christ had the same effect upon him that it always has upon those who see Jesus. It changed his estimate of his fellow-men by changing his notion about God. It set all the facts of life with which he was familiar in a new light. They remained the same, but they no longer meant the same. As he learned from his Master what is the real disposition of God toward men, they ceased to be insignificant, contemptible, or hateful. They became pathetic, inspiring, dreadful. As an educated and exclusive Jew, he had thought of the mass as 'a people who know not the law, and are accursed.' As a Christian, the same people became so valuable that he was ready to pluck out his eyes for them, and even intimated that he would be ready to lose his own soul for them. This discovery that all men are sons of God is the copious spring out of which has flowed that unfailing 'enthusiasm of humanity' which is the mark of Christianity. It is only within Christendom that a man is held to be intrinsically valuable. This valuation is based, not upon what he shows at the moment, but of what he is in his very nature. The thing which strikes most painfully a traveller in a heathen land is the low estimate of human life. The natives may be gentle and kindly as in Japan, wise as in China, acute, subtle, and graceful as in India, but in no case are they shocked as we are by unnecessary waste or loss of human life. Philanthropy is in its origin Christian. It started from the revelation of Jesus Christ, the truth which He was the first

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to get men really to believe, that God has a personal interest in men; an interest which does not depend upon their character or their accomplishments, but upon their relationship to Himself. It is only so long as philanthropy is able to maintain connection with this, its base of supplies, that it remains effective. As has been shown a thousand times, whenever a man or a society which attempts charitable work, and which has begun with a distinctly religious motive, declines from its faith and comes to work upon a humanitarian basis, it loses both its enthusiasm and its effectiveness. This must be so in the nature of the case. Love for men is only possible in the presence of God.

So absolute is the Christian conviction of God's loving-kindness that he ventures to seek for the explanation of human pain in it. This would seem to be the extremity of wrong-headedness. But he does it clearly.

'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.'

Now, no theory of the origin or meaning of pain is altogether satisfactory. But is there any more reasonable one than this? It asserts in effect that the ills which assault men and torture them, or at best, take the zest out of living, are neither meaningless accidents which come from nowhere and for no reason, nor are they the purposeless agonies caused by the crampings of a soulless 'law,' but that they are the smartings from the stripes of a rod laid on reluctantly, but intentionally, by a father. It is quite true that we all see and feel many an ill which we cannot honestly account for on this theory. There are sufferings which do not educate. They teach no lesson to the victim, because they do not leave the victim alive to learn the lesson. Or the lesson is so obscure that its purpose cannot be read. A cyclone sweeps away a man's fortune and maims his child, and what fault is it meant to punish, or what lesson to teach? Was it a fault to build upon a fair and inviting prairie? Is the bare fact that there are cyclones in that region a truth worth learning at such a cost? This is all true, and there are a thousand ills which we are not able to place under this 'educational' theory of suffering. But, then,

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what other theory is there? Of course one can dismiss the problem as insoluble. He may clench his fist like Ajax, and defy the brandished darts of Jove. He may picture existence as a sphinx with expressionless face, with the soft, inviting breast of a woman, and the claws of a wild beast. He may think of a universe compelled by a law which has no self-consciousness, and which grinds without hate and without ruth. But I say without hesitation that none of these theories of life bring, to me at any rate, the same intellectual relief, to say nothing of moral uplift, as does the Christian doctrine that God is love, and that He is slowly school-mastering His children into a recognition of their relationship to Him.

S. Paul calls the love of God a mystery. It is so. All the primal, fundamental forces are mysteries. That is to say, they are entities of whose existence no one, to whom they have been revealed, can ever again doubt; but what they are in themselves, and how they work to fulfil their results, no man has ever seen. This is the case, for example, with regard to gravitation. It is a mystery. In fact, it is nothing but a name. But in the sphere of physical things it operates so generally, and its formulas bring so much intellectual rest, that wherever it is announced it is received by all who are capable of apprehending it at all. In the higher sphere of moral things, Jesus' declaration, that love rules *de facto* as well as *de jure* solves so many difficulties, and opens so many otherwise closed lines of motion, that the number who accept it as true has steadily increased for centuries. Longfellow set the deep Christian truth to verse:—

'Love is the root of creation ; God's essence ; worlds without number
Lie in His bosom like children ; He made them for this purpose only.
Only to love and to be loved again, He breathed forth His spirit
Into the slumbering dust, and upright standing, it laid its
Hand on its heart, and felt it was warm with a flame out of heaven.'

S. D. M'CONNELL.

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II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Power of the Spirit.

The Power that worketh in us. EPHESIANS iii. 20.



It is a tremendous claim which is made in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The old Greek thinkers had dared to dream that somewhere up in heaven, could we but rise above the mists which shut it from our sight, would be found the pattern and the plan of all that is working itself out in the underworld of earth. The writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians claims that the dream has become a reality to him. He declares that that which before had not been made known to the sons of men has now been wonderfully revealed. To his freed spirit has been granted access into 'the heavenly places;' to him has been disclosed the mystery of the Divine Will, 'the purpose of the ages' and the meaning of the world. And he has been pledged to no secrecy; he longs, yearns to communicate the matter, 'to make all men see,' as through his eyes, 'what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things.'

I. Does faith ask for a sign? It shall be given, and most liberally. A two-fold sign, 'in the heaven above and on the earth beneath:' a sign that may avail for the moments of silent thought and a sign that may be ours, within and around, in the very heart of work and conflict.

And first there is the sign in the heaven above. It is the presentation of an object to thought, a great accomplished fact upon which the mind can fix and steady itself. It is the sign of the Christ risen. He who lived on earth and died, is now by God raised and glorified and set there in man's nature as proof and evidence of the certainty of man's destiny, as well as of the glory which is in store for the Church which is His body. To Him the soul of the Christian may turn as the needle to the pole, and the effect of such a turning will be peace. As often as we can truly 'lift up our hearts unto the Lord' shall we know of a certainty that our redemption is no vain hope, shall we grow in the assurance that in spite of all seeming to the contrary it is moving onward, drawing nigh.

And that is not all. There is the sign in the earth beneath: which is given as the result and so in its turn as the further evidence of that glorification of the Christ. It is the Spirit given. Given to be the 'seal,' and 'the earnest': these are the expressions employed, as you

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will remember, in this Epistle. 'The Spirit of promise,' whose coming is according to promise: yes, and whose presence is itself the pledge and promise of all that the future is to bring. How absolute and habitual was the Apostle's reliance upon the assurance so given will be seen at once by a glance over the pages which contain his words. It is not much to say that every desire, every hope for those whom he is addressing will be found to be intimately bound up in his mind with the hope which he derives from his sense of the ever continued working of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church of Christ. With this strong conviction to support him he feels that he need set no limit to his prayers and expectations: for here is a 'mighty power' which is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all' he or any may 'ask or think.'

If he is bold to believe that the eyes of his readers may be enlightened to see afresh the vision of the possibilities of their calling in Christ Jesus, it is because he can invoke for them the aid of 'a Spirit of wisdom and understanding.' Does he confidently expect to see them raised and lifted into yet more intimate relation with the spiritual sphere? It is because he is sure that there is already at work in them a quickening resurrection-power. Does he further dare to hope to see them knit together into a true and vital fellowship with all the Saints? It is because he is persuaded that there is a 'unity of the Spirit,' a great reconciling influence by which even Jew and Gentile may be brought into the one family of the Father. Or again, is he urging upon them the necessity of a higher moral standard than that of their former heathen state? He points his appeal by recalling to their thoughts the presence of 'the Holy Spirit of God' within their souls. If they are to reach the richest joy of which their nature is capable, he tells them that they must 'be filled with the Spirit.' And he is confident that from 'the Spirit's calm excess' will follow, not any sort of disorder, but the dutiful subjection and mutual subordination of Christian service.

II. Following thus the course of the Epistle we find him attributing no less than six great effects to the working of the Spirit. He is the author of light, of life, of love; that great triad of spiritual forces. It is from Him that there come the purity, gladness, and order which are the visible manifestation of these. And then as if to complete the sevenfold enumeration, it is finally to the same source that he would have the soldiers of Christ to look if they would win the victory in the lifelong conflict with the evil spirit and his host, with all that is at enmity with light and life and love.

For S. Paul, then, the thought, the message of Christianity would have been most incomplete without this third element, this indispensable witness to its truth. For him the great story of the purpose

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of the Father, to be accomplished through the transforming of men into the likeness of the perfection of the Son, would have wanted the most convincing attestation of its truth had it not been possible to appeal to unmistakable signs of the power of the Holy Ghost. Here was the proof that all was not a dream of the fervid imagination. Here was that which could enable him to rejoice in a mission and ministry more exceeding glorious than that of the ancient lawgiver inasmuch as it was a ministry 'not in word only but in power.'

III. It may not be always possible for us to be able accurately to discern and exactly to estimate the significance of that which is passing before our eyes. An age like a world becomes luminous as it recedes into the distance. And yet it is difficult to think that any can fail to recognise some of the great outlines and something of the general character of the movement, of which we form a part. Who that has had ordinary opportunities of observation, and has been at any pains to use them, can doubt that whole portions of the old creed are acquiring for multitudes to-day a new interest and a new meaning?

It may or it may not be true, as the story is often told, that it was a phrase which fell from the lips of a great preacher and was repeated by a statesman, who heard it, in his place in the House of Commons, which set men thinking and speaking in these latter days of 'the Fatherhood of God.' It is most certainly true that this first truth of Christian belief is now a reality and a force, holds a place in our thoughts, finds expression in our literature such as was not the case in the sermons, the religious books, the novels or the newspapers of forty or thirty years ago. The belief in the Heavenly Father is real to vast multitudes to-day; on all sides men hold to it with a most true and most passionate faith. They know that life for them would be intolerable without it.

So again it is equally beyond question that within comparatively recent years attention has been increasingly centred upon the Person of Christ. It is not only that assailants and defenders of revealed religion have seen that everything must ultimately turn upon the question of the historical credibility of the story of the Gospels. Men generally have felt themselves drawn to the study and to the contemplation of that Figure and that Life. Many 'lives' of Christ have been written for popular use. In our own country one of these, so it has been stated, passed through no less than seventeen editions in a single year, so great was the demand for it. Yes, men and women to-day want to hear about Jesus Christ, and will listen with very grateful attention to any one who will speak to them simply and naturally of Him. No doubt it may be said that so far it is towards the presentation of the earthly life and ministry of our Lord as given

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by the Evangelists that the thoughts of the many are most readily directed; but in days when the watchwords sounding from all sides are such as witness to a growing sense of the larger, fuller life of man, it is not wonderful that there should be a growing power of appreciating those high mysterious truths of the relations of Christ to man, and of men in Christ, which form the subject of so much of the teaching of the later writings of the New Testament.

If these things are so: if we may believe that in a remarkable way we have been learning to repeat afresh and to say with deeper meaning the first and second articles of the Creed, then indeed we may see a reason which will help to explain to us why the great third article of which we have been thinking to-day has not occupied a larger share of the general attention. Then too we may take courage to say that the day is not far distant when this shall be otherwise; that the time is at hand when preachers shall speak with a fuller knowledge, and congregations shall listen with greatly increased understanding of the working of the Holy Ghost?

And may it not be that in the midst of all our social problems we are even now being led on from a too exclusive regard to the individual, to learn, often with great difficulty and perplexity, the principles and the laws which underlie the life of society; and that so we are being trained to grasp more intelligently what can be known of the operation of that Spirit whose special office and function it is to exhibit and perfect the life of fellowship in the members of a corporate body?

Thus then, while we dare not deny that there is abundant room for confession of unfaithfulness and shortcoming on the part of those to whom many opportunities have been given, on the other hand we shall be sadly wanting in faith and gratitude if we do not see very much indeed to inspire us with hope. It may even be that there are those here to whom it will be given to do much to furnish the guidance for which not a few are inquiring already, and for which many more, we may be assured, will be asking soon.

A. W. ROBINSON.

Religious Expansion.

That ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. EPHESIANS iii. 18.

THE religious expansion over the breadth and length of humanity, is it not, if we consider it, simply a type and leading element in the general expansion which is so obviously a characteristic of England in this Victorian era?

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I. There has been the visible expansion of dominion, sometimes ambitiously sought, oftener reluctantly accepted as apparently inevitable, mainly, I suppose, through the responsibilities of our ever-advancing Indian Empire, and through the natural development of Colonial life and power, such as now the annexation of Burmah, now the assumption of sovereignty in Zululand, now the protectorate of New Guinea. It has added, men tell us, since 1837 some seven million of square miles to British territory. In America, as I learn, in Australasia, as I know, it has created new communities almost national in their type, in what was either an entire desolation or a thinly peopled savage country. And yet all the while the home population swells with an almost excessive rapidity. The swarms fly continually away, yet the hive is full and large as ever. Men ask with anxiety, as, like the Fate of some Greek tragedy, this destiny moves irresistibly on, Where will this stop? How shall this vast and scattered Empire be held together? What federation shall ward off the otherwise inevitable disruption? What central energy can be strong enough to circulate warm life-blood through these far-reaching lands? Yet this growth never seems to cease, and some great purpose it must have under the Providence of God.

But even its rapidity of expansion is outstripped by the yet swifter expansion of British commerce, and of the enterprise of British discovery, always opening out to us new fields of influence, always extending our knowledge and dominion over the earth and its inexhaustible treasures, always creating and using those means of rapid intercommunication which bring distant lands into a virtual nearness and an almost instantaneous interchange of thought. It is an expansion which is at once a result and an education of courage, enterprise, energy, even sacrifice, which often put to shame those who are the missionaries of higher and holier causes. We only realise it adequately when we sail homeward from the other end of the world, and at every halting-place rest under British dominion, and recognise on every sea and in every harbour the predominance of the British merchant flag. Nor is it wholly material, for it brings necessarily expansiveness of knowledge and idea, before which old barriers of prejudice or exclusiveness are first undermined and then swept away. It cements the unity of mankind by the lower ties of mutual interest and mutual needs, and should subserve—and historically it often has subserved—the growth of the higher moral ties of true brotherhood.

II. Then, in close relation to these actual expansions, there has grown up naturally what may be perhaps better described as diffusion through the great mass of men of the common treasures of their humanity. This last half century has been in this sense also

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pre-eminently an era of enlargement, gradually or swiftly removing limitations, material, social, political, created artificially by law or privilege. There has been, all painful exceptions notwithstanding, a great diffusion through the community at large of material comfort, and with it of some measure of refinement and culture. There has been, in spite of the awful contrast of the extremes of wealth and poverty, which startles one more forcibly than ever on revisiting, after years of absence, the vast multitudinousness of London, a larger diffusion on the whole of wealth, and a steady advance of the wages of labour of all kinds; far greater, I may add, in the lesser New Englands abroad than in the great Old England at home. There has been a still greater diffusion of political power, and an advance along the whole line of democracy; again far more decided in the Colonies, which represent more distinctly the cruder advances of our English civilisation, as the old country its consolidation and perfection. And with this, as was indeed essential, there has been a diffusion of knowledge, the creation here and in the daughter colonies of a complete scheme of popular education, the swift growth of a popular press, and a prolific popular literature, the wider extension over the length and breadth of England of scientific knowledge, of University teaching, of the educating power of art, especially of the music which is the poetry of the people. Even moral and religious agencies assume every day more of a diffusive character, appealing to the public opinion and judgment, relying on the combined service of the many. Even the Church herself here at home, and far more completely in her Colonial offshoots, feels the diffusive force of the democratic wave, and recognises more clearly the inherent powers and duties of the whole body.

III. Nor is this all. Inseparably connected with these is a higher expansion yet of idea, an enlargement both of mind and heart. We look to the domain of science and philosophy; we are struck at once with a twofold expansion; an increasing division of labour, in virtue of which rapid special advance is made at an infinite number of points; and coexisting with this, and in some sense corrective of it, a sweeping boldness of generalisation, insisting on the correlation of various sciences, on the evolution from one germ of various graduated forms of being and truth, on the provisional acceptance at least of great theories, bringing together in unity the growing variety of discovered facts. We turn to the more direct study of humanity in the history, the language, the literature of the world; the same phenomenon is reproduced. Everywhere the increased variety of special study; everywhere the breaking down of old lines of demarcation by a greater comprehensiveness of idea, combining all studies, historical archæological, linguistic, literary, in mutual influence as

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elements of a great whole, connecting more and more the story thus told of man with the story of the universe, the study of the soul with the study of its environments of body and of circumstance. Nay, in theology itself, how great has been this same expansiveness of thought and method; in the Biblical criticism, which, in its present shape is the creation of this half century or less, in the wider study of the great religions of the world in relation to our own Christianity, in the conviction that the supreme truth and power of the gospel of Christ must in some way allow for, and harmonise with themselves, all the truths discovered by men, all the forces which sway humanity. Nor have these expansions been, for indeed they could not be, merely intellectual. There has grown up, with them and through them, an enlargement of heart, a wider sympathy, between classes and schools of thought among ourselves: a more candid and generous appreciation of foreign nations, and even of the weaker races of the world; a stronger sense of a duty to humanity, higher and larger than even patriotism to our country; a deeper conviction of a brotherhood underlying the wretched divisions of the kingdom of God. Hard, I know, is the battle which this growth has to wage against the stunting and disintegrating forces, apt to be strongest in the strongest earnestness, the forces of selfishness, class narrowness, sectarianism in all its forms. But look back, as we look back to-day, and who can doubt that it has advanced already or fail to augur for it a yet greater advance in the future?

IV. But while we do thank God for that enlargement which He has so abundantly given us, we must not so fill our minds with it as to forget the need which that very enlargement makes at once greater and more difficult of satisfaction—the need of the less easy, the less obvious, extension in depth and length. In some past ages, as has been well said, the area of thought and faith was narrow, but men would not rest till they based it on the ultimate foundation, and then soared above it to the heaven itself; in our days the tendency is to delight excessively in the visible greatness of superficial expansion, to trust to this as a substitute for solidity, to be so content with its nearer glories as hardly ever to look up. Is it not ominously characteristic that much popular philosophy and literature tend in one way or another to be agnostic, contentedly indifferent to all thoughts of what, according as we take it, may be viewed as the ultimate source of all being, or the supreme perfection up to which all being is drawn; in thought describing as the only positive science the knowledge of that which actually and visibly is, in morality seeking to find a basis for the world in the world itself, in religion acquiescing in a vague bewildered consciousness of some Being unknown and unknowable. Even among those who shrink instinctively from this

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extreme form of what calls itself the spirit of the age, is there not at least liability to that tendency which underlies it, impatient of the work down towards the depth which makes no show on the surface, and of the struggle upwards to the height which seems to us cold and silent and very far away?

Must we not sometimes fear lest in the rapid expansion of our Church over the world there should be some danger of its being founded less deeply than at home now, or in the slower extension abroad of days gone by, and of its acquiescence in a lower standard of thought and life, Church organisation and Church spirit? In the pressing necessity of extension we are tempted to live, spiritually as well as temporally, from hand to mouth. It takes time, no doubt, for the new plant to strike its root deep, to grow to its stately height to bear its fullest and most perfect fruit. Half a century cannot do the work for which ages of antiquity have been needed. The newly-built church of to-day cannot be like the old cathedral, which is a long history of the past in stone. It is obvious that we must be patient, not seeking hurriedly to stimulate a mere exotic and artificial growth; but we must not turn patience into an acquiescence in acknowledged imperfection. Depth of root we need in the special soil, whatever it be, in which each Church is planted, bearing the fruit of a large independence and self-reliance, thoroughly compatible as our civil experience tells us, with close home attachment, and of thorough solidity with the Mother Church. Resolution we need, no less to pursue, however humbly and patiently, the highest ideal of what a Church should be in thought and moral culture, in unity of action and spirituality of life, in the firm grasp of the old faith, and the right daring of new developments to meet new needs. Without these the Church expansion in which we delight may have its imposing breadth and length, but it will have no solid strength to stand against the blast or the earthquake; it will wield no power to exalt and to perfect humanity.


BISHOP BARRY.

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III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Divine Compassion.

When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her. S. LUKE vii. 13.

I.  I were vain to inquire why human nature requires sympathy; we can only appeal to experience, and we find it to be so. And let the compassionate see in the conduct of their Lord, and in the perfect example of compassion which He sets before us, how they ought always to act in their compassion for a friend. Though full of the deepest feeling, how calm the blessed Jesus stands before the bier of the young man, the only son of a widowed mother. What we require in a friend is not the mere verbal expression of sympathy, or what the cold world, in complimentary language, calls condolence; but with the sympathy we look also for the advice and suggestions of which we are conscious, our minds being paralysed the while with grief, that we stand so greatly in need.

II. Grief is not sin. The sin consists only in the excess of grief; and grief is excessive when it incapacitates us for the duties of our station, or leads us to distrust of our God. This in truth is the struggle of human nature, during the threescore years and ten of its trial—to bring the human will into subjection to the divine. The question is not as to the amount of pain and grief which it may cost us to obey; but whether, notwithstanding the pain and grief, we are ready to submit, and from our trust in God's goodness, through faith to acquiesce with thankfulness in the dispensations of Providence, however painful they may prove to be. When God takes away the friend of our bosom, or the child of our affection, He does not call upon us to rejoice; but He simply requires us to be resigned—that is, submissively to yield what God requires of us under the conviction suggested by faith, that it is best that so it should be. There is no sin in praying, 'Father, let this cup pass from me,' for so prayed our sinless Lord; but there would be sin in failing to say, 'Father, not my will but Thine be done,' when the will of the Father that the cup should not pass from us, is declared.


W. F. HOOK.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Strength the Product of Joy.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

I. ET us turn for a moment or two to the words of our text, and see if we can learn from them for ourselves something of what real joy is in regard to spiritual experience. First of all there is a time, as Ezra taught, to be cast down with godly sorrow, and there is a time to be uplifted with holy joy, and the second of these is always the fruit of the first. No heart was really ever moved with godly sorrow that did not in God's good time come to holy joy, and no heart ever came to holy joy that had not first been moved with godly sorrow. We cannot tell what God's time is in dealing with individual souls. Sometimes the clouds hang long over the believer's heart, and he is tempted to doubt whether the day of joy will ever dawn upon him at all, but at such a time let him remember God's word by His prophet, 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' The joy is sure if the sorrow is real. If the heart is truly moved with the thought of its own offence against God—not only moved because it has injured itself or lost its good name in the sight of its neighbours, but because it has offended against a holy God—it will come to holy joy in God's time. We cannot tell what that time is, for His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways. It may be that the night of sorrow will endure until the dawn of the perfect day, and that the morning which brings the true fulness of joy will be the morning of the resurrection.

II. Yet we may do much for ourselves to hasten our own time of joy, and this is what I should like to say a word or two about—how we may get this joy of the Lord for ourselves, and what good it would do for us if we got it.

III. First of all, its coming may be hastened in our hearts by looking more to Jesus and less to ourselves. It is the great defect in the spiritual life of many of us that we are looking too much into the blackness of our own hearts, and looking too little up into the sweet brightness of the face of Jesus. When you feel the clouds of sorrow pressing heavily upon you, when the thought of all your sins seems crushing, try to look away from yourself and look up into the face of

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the Crucified. Forget yourself and think of Him. Gaze upon Him till His very image becomes as it were imprinted upon your soul, and as you think of Him and read of all His amazing love as it was revealed to you in the Cross on Calvary, surely the joy of the Lord will begin to dawn in your soul. You will not forget the blackness of your own sin against God, the depth of your own unworthiness, but through the darkness of that night itself will begin to shine the brightness of the love of God, and you will taste and know for yourselves what the joy of the Lord is.

And, again, you may deepen this joy or hasten its coming by more thanksgiving in your approaches to the throne of grace. Many of us who are very real in going to God in our prayer are very neglectful, very restrained in our thanks to Him; and many a time if you would kneel down before God and just try to count up all that God has done for us, beginning if you will with what is nearest and simplest to you, your daily blessings, the blessings of your past life, the blessings of yesterday—reckoning them all up—if you will think of others about you, and how different your lot is from theirs, if you think of what you might have been, of what you deserve to be, and then thank God for all, surely the sun will begin to shine even into the darkness of night.

But, above all, thank God for Jesus Christ. Thank Him that He spared not even His own Son, but gave Him up to die for you, and spared if the sense of His love to you in Jesus has any hold upon your heart at all it will lead you to rejoice in God your Saviour. Seek then, the joy of the Lord. It is a blessing God longs to give you. He is holding out His hand to give it to you, and it is only through want of faith that many of you are not enjoying it. You will not take it from God simply as a gift, but would rather work it out for yourselves. Take it from God's hand as God freely offers it to you in Jesus Christ. Ask Him by the Holy Spirit to teach you to feel the love of Jesus, and then you will know the joy of the Lord; and when you have known it, you will know the meaning of our text, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

ARCHBISHOP MACLAGAN.

Christian Gladness.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

LET us look for a minute at Christian gladness, not as a mere source of pleasure, but as a source of spiritual strength. It has been well remarked that even cheerfulness of animal spirits is of great aid to virtuousness; that an amiable and lively disposition

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enables a man to rise above his trouble with a readier ease. This is undoubtedly true; and so there are certain temptations to which a joyous temperament is at once a bar. For example, hardness in judging others, malice, pride, can scarcely co-exist with brightness and cheerfulness of heart; contrariwise, gloom and despondency are direct avenues to the tempter, predisposing to doubt and to despair. Many temptations at once flee away, when cheerfulness is enjoyed within. The power of exertion revives after sorrow from the habit of looking at the brighter side. But there is one especial way in which gladness in God is essentially strength. What, it may be sometimes asked, what is to be the uneducated man's guard against unbelief? You may suggest to the men of leisure, to the men of research, many reasonings for the hope that is in them; but the *book* evidences of the gospel are so much the accumulation of many thoughts that no one single argument at all represents the strong position of God's truth. It is probable that many of you, when arguing with an unbeliever, have felt this. You would have given anything if you could have forthcoming some reply which would at once refute his objections. No such single short reply exists. The evidences of Christianity are not one, but they are essentially accumulative. The more a man reads, the more he reflects upon the world's discipline, the more impregnable stands out the truth of God. But then you cannot say to an uneducated man, or a man whose every hour is filled up with earning his daily bread, you cannot send him to these recondite sources of conviction, you cannot refer him back to the witnesses of centuries. What, then, shall garrison his soul against the poisoned infidel tract? I reply, 'The joy of the Lord,' that lightening of the heart, the secret complacency with which no stranger intermeddles, which he consciously gathers from the practice of the commandments of Christianity, and from the resting in the doctrines of Christianity. Nay, 'the joy of the Lord' involves more than this; it comprehends also the pleasure which is derivable from religious exercises, and it disposes a man to recoil from those who would take a positive enjoyment out of his life. Teach that man to find a happiness in his Sundays, a gladness in the going up to the house of God, knitting the pleasures of his life with the mysteries of his faith, and the wave of unbelief will only break itself upon him. It is when you separate pleasure and duty, which God has never separated; giving to the things of time all the bright colours, and to the things of eternity all the dark; calling men away from what they like, to pay the debt of a dull, forced, uninterested homage to God, instead of making the rendering such homage in itself a delight—it is then that you create a temptation to the unbelief which comes in secondly to justify such withholding.

BISHOP WOODFORD.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

King Manasseh's Repentance.

And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him : and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God. 2 CHRON. xxxiii. 12, 13.



Considering this repentance of Manasseh, I shall ask you to notice ;

I. How it was produced.

1. The agent in Manasseh's repentance was, of course, God, the Holy Ghost. It is His office to convince the world of sin. He it is who sets the sins of the transgressor in battle-array before him, and then breeds within him that true repentance that ends in life. There is no genuine repentance except by the Holy Ghost.

2. But the Holy Ghost uses means. He made use of means in the case of Manasseh. He made use of Manasseh's early education. Manasseh as a boy had been well brought up by his pious father Hezekiah. He had been taught the true and right way to worship the Lord. He had received, no doubt from the prophet Isaiah and other seers, full instruction as to the meaning of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion ; and he was taught carefully how the Lord abhorred idolatry. The Holy Spirit brought back to Manasseh's recollection, at the time of his repentance, all those important lessons which he had slighted ; and made him feel how aggravated, in consequence, had been his wilful departure from the good and acceptable way, in which he had been in early life instructed.

Parents may, therefore, be encouraged to remember that the truths they have planted in their children's tender minds may germinate and come to fruit in ways they little expect. Hezekiah had long been gathered to his fathers, but the seed he had sown in Manasseh's heart issued in Manasseh's conversion.

3. But, after all, it was his distress which brought Manasseh to repentance. Like the prodigal son 'when he came to himself,' and 'he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God.'

'His prison,' writes good Bishop Hall, 'was now a more happy place for him than his palace ; Babylon a better place than Jerusalem. What fools,' the Bishop adds, 'are we to frown on our afflictions'

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These, how severe soever, are our best friends. They are not indeed for our present pleasure, but they are for our lasting profit.'

II. How his repentance was evidenced.

It was evidenced, first of all, by—

1. Deep humiliation.

2. Fervent prayer.

3. Sincere reformation.

III. How it was regarded.

1. It was viewed by God with favour.

2. It was followed with temporal blessings.

See how large these temporal blessings were. God was entreated of Manasseh and heard his supplication, and 'brought him again to his kingdom.' He not only brought him out of his dungeon at Babylon, but also set him again upon his throne in Jerusalem. And in that city (Jerusalem) he was so prosperous that he was able to repair it, to fortify it, and to build a wall round about it.

But Manasseh's repentance was more blessed still. It was followed not only with temporal blessings,

3. It was also followed with spiritual blessings.

'Manasseh, after he had humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, knew that the Lord He was God,' able to punish, and able to deliver. He was taught the true God, and the right method of worshipping God. He saw that there could be no acceptance for him but through the atoning blood of Christ. And therefore it was 'he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings.' He believed in Christ, and found in Christ all the consolation that he required; and after a happy and useful reign for the remainder of his days, he went to be with the Saviour whose Blood had washed away his crimson guilt.

C. CLAYTON.

The Fall and the Rising.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. S. JOHN xxii. 61, 62.

I. **T**HE sleep of the soul, or its condition before the sin, may be briefly described as a state of security. Not of safety, but of security; that is, of supposed safety, of imagined strength. When our Lord, at the Last Supper, so mercifully warned His disciples of the approach of danger, it was Peter, you remember, who repelled the warning by an eager assertion of his own resolution and constancy. He spoke earnestly, but he scarcely spoke humbly. He knew that he had love, and he knew that he had zeal, and he thought

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those two things must suffice for constancy. He made no allowance for altered circumstances. He remembered not how differently things appear in prospect, while they are at a distance, and in experience, when they are close upon us. And, therefore, however sincerely, and he was entirely sincere, he yet spoke ignorantly, rashly, in that spirit of self-confidence which is always utter weakness. And our Lord answered yet once more, and said to him, 'I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before thou shalt deny that thou knowest Me.' Peter was silenced, but he was not convinced. His Master had spoken plainly, but he still thought that he knew better.

The same sort of security, of self-reliance, of false confidence, is our chief bane also. Even Christian people are liable to it. Even persons who call themselves miserable sinners, and say in their prayers, 'the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall,' are exposed to the same peril; the peril of self-confidence, of relying upon their good intentions, good resolutions, or good principles, and of forgetting the solemn charge given to us all by our Master Himself, 'Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

II. We turn now to the temptation and to the sin. We have seen the condition of him who is about to enter into temptation: now let us mark the sort of disguise under which the offence comes. The disciple had already had a warning of the truth of his Master's words. He had not found it quite so easy as he had expected, to be firm and resolute.

The narrative before us not only represents the sudden and unexpected manner in which all temptation assails us, but, as it shows us a glass, the likeness and the very image of a whole class of temptations to which we are all exposed; those, namely, which derive their power from our sensitiveness to the opinion of others; from our dislike of being singular; from our desire to stand well with our neighbours, both in what we do, and in what we do not.

III. In the case before us, the prayer of Jesus, though it prevented not the fall, yet secured the rising. 'When thou art converted,' is said of one who shall first have wandered. The faith shall fail, but not utterly, and not finally. Scarcely had Peter uttered the third denial, with all its sad and grievous aggravations, than that sound was heard, which his Lord's prediction had connected with the sin: 'immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew,' and, at the same moment, his Lord, standing before His judges, exposed to every sort of insult and mockery, yet retaining amidst His sufferings the same care for His disciples which He had ever manifested, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Not a word was spoken, or could have been heard amidst the uproar then ringing through the palace: but no

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word was needed : that look, such as we can picture it, full of sorrow, full of pity, full of tenderness, recalled the sinner instantly to himself, and brought after it such a flood of grief, of self-reproach, and of misery, that he could hide his feeling no longer, but straightway went out, and wept bitterly. There, in that anguish, he is left by the Evangelists, until they have to tell how, on the morning of the Resurrection, he was one of the first to run to the sepulchre ; one of the first to whom Jesus showed Himself risen ; and how he who had so lately thrice denied, was invited by his forgiving Master thrice to declare that he loved Him, and invested afresh, and in express terms, with that apostolic commission which he might seem for ever to have forfeited.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Death attacks

Young and Old. DEATH knocks at the door of the old man, he sets traps in the way of the young man.

S. LUKE vii. 12.

Tribulation. As threshing separates the corn from the chaff (*tribulo*), so does affliction purify virtue.

EPH. iii. 13.

Tribulation and Consolation. BE thou a bearer of His Cross, as well as a lover of His kingdom. Suffer tribulation for Him, or from Him, with the same spirit that thou receivest consolation.

1 S. PET. iv. 1.

Miracles. THERE have been surprising coincidences in modern times between the wonderful in nature and the wonderful in history ; for example, between the sailing of the invincible Spanish Armada and the storm which strewn the shores of Great Britain with its ponderous wrecks ; between the march of Napoleon's army and the winter's snow which blinded, benumbed, and destroyed so many thousands, the connection is unexplained except on the principle of a Divine Providence.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.


Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS IV. 1-6.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE XIV. 1-11.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	JEREMIAH V.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	JEREMIAH XXII. OR XXXV.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Unity of the Church.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. EPHESIANS IV. 1-3.

I. HRIST'S promise has been fulfilled. The Church has maintained her life, and has preserved those things which were committed to her trust. She holds out to men now, as at the beginning, her Creeds, her Sacraments, her Scriptures. In every true Churchman's heart burns a desire for unity, which is hardly intelligible to others. In all our discouragements we cling to the idea of

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are not content with isolation; we have no pleasure in independence: a Greek Church, a Roman, an English, does not satisfy our aspirations; we desire to think only of 'the holy Church throughout the world.' 'O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.' But how are we to attain that for which we yearn? We are confronted by a state of things which seems utterly inconsistent with it. The two

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largest portions of the Church, which we sometimes call Greek and Latin, are at open war. We ourselves are disowned by both. To say nothing of communities to be found in Armenia, in Assyria, in Egypt and Abyssinia, which broke away from the Church in times of ancient controversies, but still retain the primitive constitution, and the Sacraments, and the Scriptures, and in great measure the Creed of the Church, we see a multitude of modern communities which are called Christian churches, but set for the most part little store by the organisation, the Creeds, or the Sacraments which have come down to us from the Apostles. I say nothing of the rivalry of these communities with each other, or of the bitterness which they often display towards those parts of the historical Church with which they come in contact. We look out upon this prospect and are tempted to despair.

II. Can such a scene of turmoil and confusion be ever exchanged, while the world lasts, for the reign of order and peace? Certain well-known words of our Lord seem to give the fittest answer to this question—‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’ This thought alone can support us in our perplexity. It is the same thought which is our best comfort when we consider the misery in the world around us, to the extent of which our eyes have been opened in this generation more than they were ever opened before. In both cases human ingenuity and power seem quite inadequate to the task of finding a remedy. ‘With God all things are possible.’ Yet God requires of us that we should do what we can. It is not my business to speak of that which we may do to lighten the load of misery in the world. I thank God that men’s thoughts are largely occupied with this subject. My concern to-day is with the unhappy divisions which subsist among the professed disciples of Christ. He Himself prayed that they all might be one. What can we do to bring this to pass? First, and above all things, we can pray after His example continually and earnestly. But our prayers are a mere mockery if we do not exert ourselves for the attainment of the object for which we pray. The circumstances of our own times and our own personal insignificance make it impossible for us to do anything on a large scale for the restoration of unity throughout the world, or even in our own nation. Yet the most insignificant of us can contribute something towards that great end, if in his own place and sphere he follows after the things which make for peace. Each man of us, without surrendering one article of the faith which he has received, can abstain from passionate invective against others and from needless controversy. S. Paul’s letters contain many warnings against the temper which forms parties and divides the Church. His warnings have a special application to the circumstances of our own

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time. They teach us what we ought to do, but they teach us also not to despair. The Church was not shipwrecked in the first century by the perverseness of her children. We may hope that a like perverseness will not shipwreck the Church of England now. The disputes and confusions which seem so threatening may yet, by God's mercy, give place to unity. The promise, it is true, which Christ made that the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church was made to the Church as a whole. We cannot rest upon it as a guarantee for the permanence of the Church in any one country. But His presence is with His Church everywhere, to deliver all who call upon Him faithfully. Only we must strive ourselves, by all lawful means, for that unity which we ask of Him. We must contend earnestly, no doubt, for the faith once delivered to the saints; but we must not confound with that faith private opinions and party cries, nor in our most earnest contention must we forget the law of love.

ARCHDEACON PALMER.

St. Paul's Epitome.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. EPHESIANS iv. 4-6.

I. THE text, from to-day's epistle, is an epitome of the Epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle S. Paul appears to rise even above himself in loftiness of aspiration and breadth of comprehension. There is nothing in it from the commencement to the close to mar the harmony of the whole. There are no details of Church administration to discuss, no abuses to be rebuked, no schisms to be reconciled, no perilous false doctrines to be refuted. There is throughout one majestic development of a majestic conception, conveyed in language befitting the sublimity of the theme. S. Paul appears to have been more overpowered by the dignity, more completely enlightened respecting the nature of his Apostolic office, when writing this epistle, than at any other period of his ministry. In the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Saviour, as he now apprehended them, he appears to have attained to an insight into the purposes of God and the destiny of man which he had never possessed before. How that in the fulness of time God might gather together in one all things in Christ; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ. In the mystery of Christ made manifest in the Flesh he beholds, not one nation, or tribe, or family, not prophets, saints, and martyrs, but the whole human race invested with a new dignity,

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proclaimed as the special objects of divine care, even made partakers of the Divine nature. The Resurrection from the grave was a witness of the triumph of this humanity over the bondage of physical infirmity. The Ascension into heaven was a witness to its still more glorious triumph over the degradation and corruption of sin. To this perfect revelation now made in the fulness of time all partial revelations had pointed, and in it all were merged, and received their fulfilment. To the Jew had been revealed the knowledge of the Divine Unity—a God reigning supreme alike over the powers of nature and the hearts of men. And in the possession of this knowledge the Jew had reached a spiritual elevation above the nations of the earth around him. But there was withal no corresponding sense of the true dignity of humanity. It was not as man, but as a descendant from one man, that the Jew claimed communion with God and sought an access to Him, while the Gentiles in the divided objects of their worship had failed to see how all led up to and were united in one Supreme Being, and how all men were bound together in the ties of one common humanity. In the Gospel as now proclaimed by S. Paul, Jew and Gentile are alike invited to claim an access to God in virtue of their privileges as men. It is the discovery to all of Him who is the living centre of the universe. It is the assertion that all men are related to Him, and that He is interested in all men. It is the breaking down of every wall of partition between man and man, and the proclamation of a fellowship between God and man transcending every race and status, reaching alike to barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, so that in virtue of this common humanity all men are potentially, and all baptized men are actually, one family in the sight of God. There is one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, above all, through all, and in all.

II. If Christianity be indeed the revelation of an eternal order of a truth which cannot be shaken, it will not rely for support upon the goodwill of governments or the favour of classes, and dwindle and disappear when these aids are withdrawn, but rooted in the principles of our nature it will for ever speak with authority to all sorts and conditions of men in all the varying phases of difficulty and doubt. And when its hold upon society is weak and its voice wavering, it will be so only for the want of faithful and courageous utterance. Let us not be afraid or ashamed to set forth the gospel as a power intended to encourage and guide the aspirations of our common humanity. In Christianity we have the clearest as we have also the earliest recognition in the world's history of the value of that humanity, the noblest conceptions of its present dignity and its future destiny. Let us not in faithless disloyalty allow it to degene-

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rate in our hands, to lose its comprehensive character or become the ally of a class or party. This is not the appeal of distrust or unbelief, but of the deepest reverence and most confident hope. It is not the appeal to what is called the spirit of the age, emancipating itself from the claims of authority and antiquity. Still less is it that of a mere devotional sentiment, impatient of systematic teaching, and recognising only the promptings of its own emotions. It is the expression of humble, earnest faith, inviting the theologian to assume his honoured office as the interpreter and proclaimer of God's message to man; believing that our humanity is one, one in community of interest in the present, and one in its connection alike with the future and the past; regarding all partial effort as of value and permanence only in its relation to that 'far-off divine event' when we shall all know and feel that there is indeed one body and one Spirit, one God and Father of all, above us all, through us all, in us all.

H. W. WATSON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Pride and Humility.

When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher. S. LUKE xiv. 10.

I.  N enunciating this parable our Lord must have had in mind a similar one in the Book of Proverbs. 'Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men. For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.'

Now the Lord, who by His inspiration put these words into the lips of the writer of the Book of Proverbs, must have meant Himself by 'the prince.' He must have meant His coming to render to every one according to his deeds, proud or humble, when He speaks of one being put lower in the presence of the prince. All pride, all self-assertion, is in the presence of a King, the supreme fountain of honour, and with this disposition of mind the Supreme Prince can have no sympathy, for in coming to save us He left the highest place in the universe, the throne, or rather, the bosom of God, and took the lowest room.

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II. The shame of mortified pride does not always follow it in this world. Self-assertion, forwardness, and boasting do not always entail a disgraceful fall upon the man who displays them. Men who are ambitious and self-seeking at times attain to the height of their ambition. But a day is coming when the words with which the parable concludes will be verified in the case of every man. The Judge in that day will remember and humble every act of pride, just as He will remember and reward every act of humility.

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Unsanctified Affliction.

O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. JER. v. 5.



HIS might not unfitly be called one of the lamentations of Jeremiah. The entire chapter contains a vehement expostulation with the Jewish nation for the manifold corruptions and disorders which had shown themselves, both in Church and State; and there had been a threatening to bring upon them yet further calamities by the invasion of the Chaldeans. So universal had this degeneracy of manners become, that the challenge is boldly thrown out at the opening of the chapter, that all Jerusalem shall be searched for one upright man. 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find a man; if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.' But the search is vain. Too well was this known to him who threw out the challenge, for he had observed their deportment under former visitations, had seen how they fretted and chafed as each fresh judgment came upon them, and how, in the midst of all their professed appeals to his sovereignty, saying, 'The Lord liveth,' the worm of rebellion and cherished pride was eating like a canker at the heart; and therefore the prophet exclaims, 'O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.'

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The words may suggest to us the consideration of a subject more or less belonging to all of us, namely, the danger of unsanctified or unimproved afflictions. We all know what the law of God's household is with regard to chastening, and what misgivings of our spiritual state we may well have, if we pass through life without it. But then we might have chastening, and yet not bring forth the fruit of chastening; might feel the stroke of the rod, and yet not hear the voice of the rod. It was so with the Jews in our text, and the fact suggests a solemn thought, namely, that chastening despised, or chastening resisted, or chastening unblest, cannot leave us in the state in which we were before. That which would profit the soul if used well, must be hurtful to it if used ill. The remedies of heaven cannot be inoperative; they must aggravate the maladies which they are not allowed to heal, and will make the face harder than a rock, if they induce not a tender and softened heart.

Let us proceed to investigate some forms of this unsanctified chastening, as they appear in the several expressions of the text, and then consider how the evil of which it warns us may be kept away.

I. First, with regard to unsanctified or unimproved chastening. The first impression in the text seems to set forth that misuse of it which comes of insensibility. 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.' The language may be taken to describe, not so much the receiving of correction in the spirit of defiant and avowed contempt, as the act of setting lightly by affliction, of not bestowing upon it the attention it deserves, having no reverence for its Author, and no consideration for its design or end. Hence we are open to the truth of the text, whenever the divine chastisement is received by us in a heedless and inconsiderate spirit.

II. But the text adverts to a yet more offending and presumptuous deportment under affliction, namely, when the chastisements of God are received in a stout-hearted, rebellious, defying spirit. Not only have they refused to receive correction, but they have made their faces harder than a rock. In this case, as we see, God is not left out of sight. On the contrary, He is believed and felt to be the Author of all permitted sufferings. The awful impiety is, that He is regarded as the unjust Author. The heart secretly arraigns the wisdom and goodness of His purpose, declaring the utter impossibility of any resulting good, and by a cherished hardihood of spirit threatening to prove the truth of its own convictions. You have a painful picture of this state of men, in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, where Ephraim resisting the divine judgments, is represented as saying in the pride and stoutness of his heart, 'The walls are fallen down, but we will build them up with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we

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will change them into cedars.' Thus the heart is like an anvil; every stroke that God lays upon it only reverberates and returns the blow. It was bad enough when He had smitten us and we did not grieve, when He had consumed us and we refused to receive correction; but now, with awful impiety, we, as it were, dare Him to do His worst; we make our faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

III. But let us consider how these dreadful effects may be prevented, and the chastenings of God turned to a sanctified account.

1. And first we must be careful to acknowledge the design of God in sending our trials, and do all we can to bring that design about. 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved'—plainly showing that God intended them to be grieved; 'Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to return'—a clear intimation that the very purpose of their chastisement was to make them return. Hence our first care should be to see that any chastisement that God sends us is of a truth accomplishing its mission. Afflictions are designed to promote the advancement and improvement of character.

2. Again, in order that chastening may be blessed to us, we must have a care that we do not become weary under it, however long it may continue. If we restrain prayer, and relax effort, and lose confidence, and close up the book of God's promises as not belonging to us; then, though tried in the fire, we shall not be purged by the fire; though chastened, we shall not be blessed: and if the grace of God interpose not, we shall soon become as those who make their faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

D. MOORE.

IV. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Use and Abuse of the World.

And they that use this world, as not abusing it. I CORINTHIANS vii. 31.

I.



HE connections of life. S. Paul says, 'Let those who have wives be as though they had none.' And the principle is of wide application. Let those who have husbands, let those who have parents, let those who have children, let those who have brothers or sisters, let those who have relations and friends, be as though they had none. Let those who use be all as not abusing.

And in what sense? Is there no tie, no close, endearing tie, no tie

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of duty as well as of affection, in all these things? Is the meaning of the Apostle that which would contradict the plainest rules of Scripture and of morality, regard these ties as if they were not binding, as if they were nothing for you? We need not answer that question. The tie of relationship was in S. Paul's eyes one of sacred obligation: he has enforced it in many of his epistles. The tie of marriage was in his eyes so solemn and so indissoluble that on that very account he here urges men to hesitate before they form it in times of peril and of distress. Evidently his meaning is, use, but abuse not. Hold not with too tenacious a grasp that which must soon be dissolved, by death, or by the Advent. Set not your highest affections on any one of these things. See that, however much you love one another, you love Christ, and love God more.

II. Again, in reference to the circumstances of life. S. Paul says, 'Let them that weep be as though they wept not, and those who rejoice as though they rejoiced not.' Joy and sorrow, elation and depression, sunshine and storm, the time to laugh and the time to weep, all are to be as if they were not. The gospel does not say, it is wrong to weep, or it is wrong to rejoice. The gospel does not encourage that dead level of human feeling which never rises into enjoyment, and never sinks into sadness. It only says, 'When you rejoice, let it be as though you did not rejoice; and when you weep, let it be with you as though you wept not.' Use the circumstances of life as not abusing them. That is, use them not with an eager, a grasping, an absorbed and engrossed mind. 'Let them that weep be as though they wept not, and them that rejoice as though they rejoiced not.'

III. Once more, and most obviously, the rule has an application to the possessions of life. And this in all degrees. All men have something; and all men, certainly all working men, whether high or low, are ever gaining something. For all these, therefore, it is written, 'Let those who buy be as though they possessed not.'

God has given us in it much to enjoy. He has given us many common, and He has given us many special blessings. To live at all in this beautiful world, with all its treasures of sight and sound, its things good for food and pleasant to the eyes, its comforts for the body, and its means of information and improvement for the mind, this is enough, this ought to be enough, for any man, both to satisfy desire and to awaken gratitude. Let us not abuse the gift. Let us not use this world greedily; giving ourselves to its enjoyments in excess, intemperately or sinfully. Let us not use it selfishly; catching all for ourselves, and thinking nothing of the wants, in soul and body, of those around us. Let us not use it unthankfully; seizing the gifts, and forgetting the Giver. Let us not use it blindly; having all our attention fixed on the near, the present object, and losing sight

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altogether of the higher and better, the enduring and the heavenly.
In all these ways we may use or we may abuse the world.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

V. ILLUSTRATIONS

Vocation. THAT is not ever the best and fittest which God chooseth,
EPH. iv. 1. but that which God chooseth is ever the fittest.

GOD never employed any man in His service whom He did not enable to do the work set him.

It is a vain thought to flee from the work that God appoints us, for the sake of finding a greater blessing to our own souls, as if we could choose for ourselves where we shall find the fulness of the Divine Presence, instead of seeking it where alone it is to be found, in loving obedience.

Baptism. WE have no right of inheritance in the spiritual Canaan,
EPH. iv. 4, 5. the Church of God, till we have received the sacrament of our matriculation.

Christ's Baptism. CHRIST was not baptized with any intent to be sanctified by it; but to sanctify the waters, and to convey to them
S. MATT. iii. 14 a power of cleansing our souls.

Baptism a Sacrament of Death. BAPTISM, according to S. Paul, represents to us the death and burial of Christ, binding us thenceforth to die to ourselves and sin, and to live to Him. Hence the sacrament of life is a sacrament of death; it is at once our
ROM. vi 4. cradle and our tomb.

Unity of Christian Faith. BISHOP SELWYN, of New Zealand, would not preach in any place in Polynesia where a mission of another denomination was established, being determined not to occasion
EPH. iv. 1-3. perplexity to the heathen by the sight of differences among Christians which they could not comprehend.

Sabbath. ALTHOUGH a parallel is drawn between the creation of the
S. LUKE xiv. 1. world by God in six days, and resting upon the seventh, on the one hand, and the labour of man for six days, and his resting on the seventh on the other; the reason for the keeping of the Sabbath is not to be found in this parallel, but in the fact that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because He rested on it. The

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significance of the Sabbath, therefore, is to be found in God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day of the week at the creation, *i.e.* in the fact that after the work of creation was finished, on the seventh day, God blessed and hallowed the created world, filling it with the powers of peace and good belonging to His own blessed rest, and raising it to a participation in the pure light of His holy nature.

THE Sabbath is not an arbitrary appointment of no meaning and significance.

THE rest of the people of God is like the rest of God Himself, a Sabbatism.

God did not create man for the greater glory of the Sabbath, but He ordained the Sabbath for the greater welfare of man. Consequently, whenever the welfare of man and the rest of the Sabbath happen to clash, the Sabbath must yield.

THE Sabbath was made for man, *i.e.* for his temporal and eternal benefit. . . . This was its purpose when God instituted it, together with the marriage relation, in the state of man's innocence; and this Christ has restored, as He restored the marriage relation to its original purity. Commentators pass too slightly over this point; and some of them misconstrue Christ's and S. Paul's opposition to the Jewish Sabbatarianism of that age into a violation or abrogation of the fourth commandment.

Christ and ALL that belongs to God belongs to Christ.

God.

EPH. iv.

HE is Lord over all that pertains to the Father. Creator of this universe of worlds (*πάντα*) is God. Mediator of that creation is the Son.

The Son is made the heir of all, that all owes its origin to Him.

HE (Christ) is thus placed out of the category of the created.

It is here indicated that the accomplishment of the creation rests in Him. (All things = the totality of things, the existing universe.)

HE is the end of creation, containing the reason in Himself, why creation is at all, and why it is as it is.

HIS Creatorship excludes creatureship in Him, and the identity of the Creator and Redeemer is so affirmed, that He who became Man is placed more under the idea of 'God' than the idea of 'man,' hence, Theodore, 'not as having Creation for a sister, but as begotten before all worlds.'

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Lordship of the Sabbath. As the Sabbath must give way before the Temple service, so must Sabbath and Temple service both give way

LUKE vi. before something greater, viz., the Son of Man. If the day of rest and glorifying God must yield even to the rational inhabitant of earth, how much more might the Son of Man, the Redeemer, and the Ideal of mankind, have dominion over the Sabbath-service. The true Sabbath-breakers were those who would sacrifice man to the Sabbath.

THE Son of Man, inasmuch as he is the Head of the race, has a right to dispose of this institution. He is raised above it, as a means of education. He may therefore modify, or abolish it altogether, if He thinks fit.

THE emphasis rests on the word 'Lord,' which accordingly is placed first in the original (*Κύριος γάρ*, etc.), the *γάρ* = that the disciples were blameless. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, as being Himself the Divine Rest and the Divine Celebration, He is both the principal and the object of the Sabbath; He rests in God, and God in Him; hence He is the Mediator of proper Sabbath-observance, and the interpreter of the Sabbath law.

MAN, like God, is to work and rest: thus human life is to be a copy of the Divine life.

WORKS of moral activity: the essential characteristics of these *ἔργα* (Heb. iv.), from which man rests in God, consist in conflicts with moral evil.

THE creation and destination of man to be in God's image, contains the ground of the fact, that man can find rest only in God.

THE reason of the seventh day: The soul of man was to form itself on the model of the Spirit of God.

EVERY Sabbath is a beckoning to the rest of God, and an attestation of it.

THE Sabbath foreshadows things: modifications of the form, and reason for the institution would come, but not its abolition. It will cease only when man attains the perfect stature of the Son of Man. The Sabbath will retain a certain measure of its force as long as this earthly economy endures.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

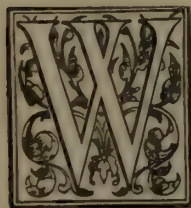
Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, I CORINTHIANS I. 4-8.
GOSPEL, S. MATTHEW XXII. 34-46.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . JEREMIAH XXXVI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . EZEKIEL II. OR EZEKIEL XIII. TO
VER. 17.
SECOND LESSONS, . . . ORDINARY.

I. SERMON ON THE EPISTLE

The Christian Idea of the Unseen.

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit. I CORINTHIANS ii. 9, 10.



WE belong to two worlds—the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the Eternal—indissolubly united, unceasingly affecting one another, tending gradually to regain in a tenfold consummation through the work of Christ that unity which they have in the sight of God. We may throw ourselves, with all our energies, into the pleasures of the day; we may use every power and gift which we have received, for transitory ends; we may fill our time with distractions which leave no opportunity for reflection; but none the less in all this we are subject, against our will it may be, to forces of an invisible order. There is another side to every act of self-indulgence and neglect, of pride and arrogance, of oppression and unkindness, of forgetfulness

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of God and man, and through such acts we fashion inevitably the character which endures for ever. Or, again, we may fix our eyes on a far-off heaven and lose ourselves, as we suppose, in thoughts of God and the soul; but none the less we shall find that we cannot escape from the present; we shall be constrained to confess that we are not able to realise the glory of the Unseen, otherwise than as it is reflected from the things of earth; and that it is only as we use earthly things that we become capable of seeing the eternal things which they signify. Thus the conviction is forced upon us by actual experience that we belong to two worlds. But though we may hide from ourselves and hide from others thoughts which we are too indolent or too fearful to entertain, the fact still stands in its august magnificence, ready to make itself felt in some season of calm or trouble. Life may at first seem to be clear and bright like the day, full and complete with its chequered beauty of light and shade; but as the years go on we remember that, like the day, it is born of the darkness and dies into the darkness; and, more than this, we come to know that that darkness, like the inimitable star-lit spaces of the sky, reveals to us depths of God which we could not otherwise comprehend. For it was, I suppose, under the clear night that we first learned how little we are and how great we are; and so it is in the prospect of that vaster and more awful night by which our time of labour is closed in that we learn to recognise the meaning and possibilities of life. In itself, indeed, the darkness can give no sign; but Scripture throws just that light upon it which makes the mysteries of past and future radiant with encouragement no less than with wisdom. It frees us from the tyranny of material causation; it shows us that that which we necessarily speak of as the future is the manifestation of that which is; it guards us from endeavouring to give substance to the unseen by crowding into it things which 'eye hath seen and ear heard'; it presents the Eternal, not as the endless extension of time, but as the opposite of time, and forbids us to think of our transformation into the likeness of Christ as the result of any physical process; it reveals to us the 'things which God prepared for them that love Him,' things which enter not into the heart of man, even fellowship with Him in Christ, fellowship with man in Him, fellowship in man with all creation—that peace passing knowledge which is the fulness of harmonious energy, when God shall be all in all. We belong, then, I repeat, to two worlds, which are, in very truth, one world. We cannot escape from this necessity of our constitution; but our joy and our strength, our confidence and our inspiration is to know that we do belong to both.

I. I wish, therefore, to suggest only two thoughts on the relation of the Unseen to the Seen. I wish to point out how the Seen is for us the revelation of the Unseen, and how the Seen is also the sphere in

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which the Unseen must be realised by us. The Seen, the present, is for each one of us the revelation of the Unseen, the Eternal. In quieter moments we all look forward to the future, and perhaps we ask, 'Where shall I go hereafter? Shall I be happy?' when we ought rather to ask, 'Where am I now? What is my idea of happiness?' Happiness, we can see at once, involves a harmony between a man's capacities and desires and his environment. If his circumstances are in conflict with his desires, or if his desires are unable to realise the harmony which exists, he cannot be happy. The prospect which thrills the trained eye with delight has no meaning for the blind; the purity of a beautiful soul touches the profligate with shame. Now, as Christians, we believe that man was made to know God, and that, in Christ, this knowledge can be gained. Happiness for man, therefore, lies absolutely in conformity to God, and this conformity is in effort, in aim, in inception, in essence, not future, but present. 'This is,' the Lord said, not, 'This will be,' or, 'This leads to,' or, 'This assures,' but, 'This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send.' This is eternal life, sovereign in its conquering power, invincible in its sustaining energy, now while the conflict is to be waged, now while the lesson is to be learned, no less than when we know even as we are known. Holiness is, in other words, the necessary foundation of happiness here and hereafter—now when we see through a mirror in a riddle, and then when we see face to face. The state of grace and the state of glory, it has been said, differ not in nature, but in degree; the divine judgment is not an arbitrary sentence, dependent upon a variable will, but an exhibition of things as they are. Pain is the necessary consequence of sin. God cannot make the bad happy, for that would be to deny Himself. No change of place can change the character; we must carry ourselves wherever we are. It is clear, then, how the present is for us individually the expression of the future, the seen and the unseen, because it is the expression of the Eternal in the terms of human life. We are, indeed, wholly unable to give shape to being in another order, and in this respect the reserve of Scripture is in striking contrast with the boldness of human imaginings. But still we can perceive that when our earthly life ceases we are that which we have become, and that what we are we must be only more completely, more intensely when the veils of earth are withdrawn from the Divine Presence and those distractions which now hinder the concentration of the soul upon the one object which will then occupy its whole field of vision have passed away. What we are we must be hereafter, more completely, more intensely in the face of that perfect righteousness and love, that beauty, and purity of truth which will then be open before us. He who, casting himself on God, has resolutely striven for justice, with imper-

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fect knowledge it may have been, but with a true heart ; who has tenderly fostered every germ of sympathy through disappointment and loneliness ; who has longed to interpret what he has seen of the inner glories of nature ; who has chivalrously sheltered tender souls in temptation and reproach, will, in that all-embracing glory, find every effort crowned with the joy of attainment beyond all hope. That which was begun in God will find its end in Him.

II. And what shall we say, on the other hand, of those who have sought only the praise of men, when they see themselves as God sees them ; of those who have triumphed by self-assertion when they find themselves alone in the desolateness of utter bereavement ; of those who have sold for fame and gold gifts of insight and vision, gifts of art and eloquence which were meant to be the enjoyment of a people, when they are visited by the torturing host of lost opportunities and feel the purpose and splendour of the inheritance which they have wasted ? Can we picture any anguish more terrible and enduring which will then only be able to find relief when it is welcomed as the just chastisement of God ? Now, in each case—and it is this upon which I wish to insist—in each case joy or wretchedness follows by inevitable sequence from the action of the same forces of perfect holiness upon different characters. Then devotion finds rest in the loving Father to whom it has consecrated the offering of a chequered life, and selfishness recognises the awful solitude of exile from a righteous Judge who makes Himself felt in an awakened conscience. This is the end, and it is discoverable already in the facts of life. Senses, thoughts, affections for good become naturally fertile in divine consequences which pass all understanding ; and, on the other hand, the faculty, unused or misused, grown powerless or distorted, remains to witness against its possessor by its impotence or perversity. The vices of arrogance and pride involve the misery of hopeless humiliation ; the vices of self-indulgence create a void of passion which cannot be satisfied. So it is with the hereafter as in the now ; so it is that the Seen is when we look calmly into the depths of our souls the revelation of the Unseen, the present, and the eternal. It follows, you will see at once, that the present is not only the revelation of the eternal towards which we look, but also the sphere in which we must realise the eternal which we hold. The Unseen which is our future is prepared by the present ; the Unseen which is our faith is shown by the present. No reproach has been more frequently brought against Christianity than that it teaches men to disregard the claims of to-day in the contemplation of some distant heaven. So far as the reproach is just, it applies not to our creed, but to the perversion of it. For us, as Christians, our faith is that which is the spring of our life ; it brings home to us our immortality, it teaches us that we have already entered

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on the privileges and powers of the future. 'Ye are come,' and not, 'Ye shall come,' 'unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven.' Ye are fellow-citizens of the household of God, and not 'Ye shall be'; and even now 'We have,' and not simply 'We shall have' hereafter, 'a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Just so far, then, as we use this spiritual endowment which is given us, we shall use it with the conditions of our outward state. When the Lord bade the Pharisees 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,' He did not, as we commonly suppose, make a division between the obligations of man: He declared their real unity. He is no Christian who can pass by on the other side, busied with his own aims, where humanity lies before him naked and wounded and half dead; he is no Christian who thinks that any part of his daily work lies outside the transforming influence of his Master's presence. Every human action must assume for the Christian fresh importance, and the same principle which enriches his view of life ennobles, as we have seen before, his view of nature. The sense of the Eternal in the present, gives to things transitory a power of meaning for the believer which they cannot otherwise have. God has revealed to him that which 'eye saw not and ear heard not.' For him the 'kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,' and he confidently demands the attributes of its service. He does not look away from the things of earth, but he looks through them to their Maker. Therefore, the Christian, even more surely than the poet, finds in the meanest flower that grows thoughts that often lie too deep for tears, just as he finds in the poorest outcast the throbbings of a brother's pulse. In his estimate of the world he refuses to acquiesce in the surface of things, to disparage the least gift which God has made, to accept the verdict of a barren failure; he knows the conditions of life, the strength of life, and the end of life. 'I saw,' S. John writes, after he had contemplated the Vision of Judgment—'I saw a new heaven and a new earth.' The heaven and the earth are new, and yet they are not like the former new creation. They always have been, but there is not in us the nature, the ability to behold their veiled beauty. But at last the veil shall be drawn aside, and things shall be seen as they are in the sight of God. This consummation the Apostle shadows forth, and shows how the eternal order follows the order of time, being at once its offspring and glory. The old names are used, heaven and earth, that we may know that the two worlds are one; but they are so used that we may feel that they have become symbols for realities which we cannot yet grasp. That which most vividly represents

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change and weariness—the restless waters and the still dark night—is taken away. There is, we read, no more sea, there is no need of the sun there, neither of the moon which were before, for times and for seasons, for days and for years. The present conditions of our life are wholly removed, but we remain. Our powers, our works, our affections—all that we are, all that we have become—is taken up into the new order. Meanwhile, we wait, sure at least of this, that that which shall be is the fulfilment of that which is past, and that nothing that is shall be lost.

BISHOP WESTCOTT.

II. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Morality Dependent upon Religion.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
S. MATTHEW xxii. 40.



THESE two laws—*i. e.*

1. Duty to God;
2. Duty to man.

Sometimes it has been the temper of the time to lay emphasis upon the first of these.

(*E.g.* the 'theological' period of seventeenth century.)

Now, the tendency is to exploit the second.

I. Thus has emerged the notion that morality has a basis of its own.

The question asked is, 'Is morality possible apart from religious sanctions?'

1. At first sight it would seem to be so.

The large numbers who are moral; they are just from choice, pure because they loathe lust, generous by instinct, but they refer none of these things to religion.

2. The new scientific basis of morals.

That is: that morality rests ultimately, not upon a commandment of God, but upon the experience of men.

[Conscience, they say, is but inherited utility which has lost her memory and changed her name.—(Martineau.)]

The practical outcome is the widespread feeling that while morality is a bounden obligation, 'religion is a matter of choice.'

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II. What answer shall we make?

1. The fact of a morality existing at any period is not conclusive as to its origin.

It may be a survival of a previous impulse.

(Like the company of a ship at sea who make rules of living, but both their course and their motive power are provided in advance.)

The present existing morality is at least entangled with Christianity.

It is not so easy to de-religionise life as many suppose; not only Creed and Church affect it, but a host of more subtle things.

[There are some ugly indications that morality is already losing its force where it is separated from religion.] In any case it is too soon to see whether or not it can go alone.

2. It leaves many facts unaccounted for.

It cannot make anything of sins of the soul which do not emerge into actions. It cannot make anything of remorse.

'My sins, my sins, my Saviour, they take such hold on me.'

3. The universal instinct that the consequences of actions pass beyond.

This instinct cannot rest upon experience or observation, for these are mostly to the contrary.

4. It will not endure the *experimentum crucis*.

Take the two theories into the market-place and with them preach righteousness!

[A Unitarian preacher was holding forth in a squalid court in Glasgow urging repentance on the ground of expediency!

'Eh, sir,' cried an old virago, 'your rope's no lang enuech for the likes o' huz!']

Which will you write over your daughter's chamber-door, 'Society never forgives,' or, 'Blessed be the pure in heart, for they shall see God'?

Will you say to your son, 'Thou shalt not be found out,' or, 'Thou shalt not steal'?

S. D. M'CONNELL.

The Love of God and Man.

Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*
S. MATTHEW xxii. 37, 38.

I. IF it is hard to believe that such a world as this was made and is ruled by love—at least by love armed with omnipotence—let us not forget that it is harder still to believe the contrary, to tolerate the voice that speaks of man as forlorn and fatherless, as

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born he knows not whence or why, and bound he knows not whither, the outcome and the victim of non-moral forces acting systematically, but incapable of regard for his welfare, and which have no ear into which, after passing through the salutary discipline of trial, sorrow and suffering, man can breathe the acknowledgment, 'Thy loving correction hath made me great.' Heart and brain alike refuse to accept a supposition which contradicts our best and strongest instincts, and which, under the storm and stress of life must for the mass of men mean recklessness and despair. And surely, in weighing the probability or improbability of an opinion, its moral influence may fairly count for something. If of two rival creeds the one inspires courage, buoyancy, self-control, endurance, resignation, hope; and the other means moral paralysis, or else, disguised, perhaps, in subtler and more graceful renderings, the old conclusion, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,'—in such a case does not reason allow us to judge them, in some measure at least, by their fruits? The creed cannot be greatly wrong that plainly tends to make and keep the lives of men right. And, tried by this test, the faith that finds among and in spite of the crookedness and contradictions of the world, the upward footprints of wisdom and love, must surely be preferred.

Again, the love that man has for his fellow-man may serve us as some pledge and proof that there is love on an infinitely grander scale elsewhere. A stream so broad and deep and beautiful surely implies a never-failing, heaven-fed source.

Take human life in its darkest and most degraded forms; study the annals even of outcast misery and hardened vice; mark how the wretched will do deeds of silent, unconscious heroism for the wretched; how from hearts seemingly hard as the nether mill-stone soft and genial drops of sympathy and self-sacrifice will flow; fathom, if you can, the wide and swelling waters of pure affection that roll round the world; see how the tide is steadily rising higher, sweeping away the barriers between man and man, bearing upon its breast a thousand noble enterprises; above all, think of the height attained in the character and career of the Man Christ Jesus; and then ask, whence came this mighty flood, whence came its power of growth, its wisdom of direction, whither does it tend, what is its final destiny? Must there not be some boundless reservoir, some inexhaustible ocean of divine love from which the streams that make the life of man and all things glad and wholesome, are fed, and into which all nature, all humanity, shall some day be gathered? I believe in the love of man, and therefore I believe in the love of God.

II. What are those pregnant hints, those fundamental, indisputable truths of Scripture which in their different ways combine to form

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the larger hope? Take, first, the character of God. And let me ask in passing, has not every true development or reformation of theology been, in its essence, a growth in knowledge of the character—the will, purpose, and methods—of God? God, we are told, is love. Love is a fire; it purifies; it may, it must, consume all that is foul and false, all that is offensive to the perfect holiness of God; its force is endless and unquenchable.

‘The keen sanctity,
Which, with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, must seize,
And scorch, and shrivel’

the sin-stained soul of man, consuming even while it quickens it. There can through all eternity be no terms or truce between the love of a Holy God and the sinner so long or so far as he continues to be sinful. And who shall venture to fix bounds beyond which the needful process of purgation must not pass? Who shall presume to say that for some the fire will not consume utterly and without quickening? But, taking love only on its sterner side—thinking of it only in relation to the dross in human character and conduct—where among its possible processes can we find room for deeds and instruments like those of the torture chamber ‘writ large,’ and endlessly protracted?

Again, God is the God of mercy. ‘His mercy is over all His works.’ ‘His mercy endureth for ever.’ Can that mercy have shrunk to the little measure of this present life? Will the Divine Father’s heart be finally steeled against the prodigal unless within his allotted portion of the threescore years and ten he finds his way home from the far country? At the hour of death does not only man’s state, but God’s nature change?

Again, God is a God of justice, and justice, to speak simply, means fair play. He will judge the world in righteousness, equity, and truth. May we have grace ourselves to live and to help others to live in constant remembrance of that strict and solemn account which we each for himself must one day give before the judgment seat of Christ. The methods, the verdicts, the punishments, the retributions of perfect justice must themselves be exquisitely perfect. Vindictiveness can have no place, but ‘vengeance’—righteous, wholesome vengeance—‘is Mine, saith the Lord.’ The rough-hewn trials and verdicts of this world can be but faint and blurred types of what shall be hereafter. And does it not follow from this attribute of God that our hearts can with humble confidence trust the destiny of the creation to its fair and faithful Creator? ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’

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Again, and to sum up hastily and incompletely what calls for very different treatment—the Bible has clear pointings to a final triumph, to a perfect unity in which God shall be all in all. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem it; His glorious purpose was ‘to sum up all things in Christ’; Christ, lifted up on the Cross, would draw all men unto Himself; in His last agony He urged a plea which in some measure applies to every child of man, ‘Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;’ in the mysterious interval between death and resurrection, He proclaimed the glad tidings to the spirits in prison, who had once been signally doomed for disobedience; to Him, highly exalted, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; through Him will God reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens; the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; the last enemy, death, shall have no more dominion, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; and, as the closing scene of the sublime drama, ‘God shall be all in all.’

BISHOP JAYNE.

A Christian Woman.

Mary hath chosen that good part. S. LUKE x. 42.

I. **F**IRST, we will look at women in the Old Testament. Perhaps the noblest picture of her sphere is given by a person introduced to us as the mother of King Lemuel in the Book of Proverbs. In those eastern countries of which he was an inhabitant it was not easy to find what he describes. The eastern wife had become a slave, she had little or no education, she was seldom allowed outside the walls of her husband's house, she was not his companion, but his servant. The days of Sarah, and Rebekah, and Rachel, were over. Occasionally a heroine like Miriam, or a tigress like Jezebel or Athaliah would rise into prominence, but the usual path of woman's life had become monotonous and degraded. Her time was spent within the walls of the harem, and was occupied with childish trivialities, petty quarrels and jealousies, follies of vanity, and the wickedness of mischief and intrigue. Her mind, vacant of all larger and higher interests, became feeble and silly. Added to this, was the wretched fact that she was not even mistress of her own household or of her husband's heart. Polygamy was allowed. The number of a man's wives appears to have been only limited by the expense of their maintenance. The eastern lady might have at any moment her nearest and dearest affections and hopes superseded by an interloper.

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Under such a system malice and hatred were the inseparable accompaniments of family life. Bitterness and dissension, the discarded favourite weeping in solitary and helpless anguish, the insolent pride of the new rival, the children ranged in hostile camps—these were the sights that were commonest in an eastern household. It is a picture of degradation and misery, and so the usual state of women at that time in those countries puts additional emphasis on the question of King Lemuel's mother: 'Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies?'

II. That this opinion could not hold good now for a moment is owing to our Lord and to His kingdom. He has restored woman to her true position as man's companion. He has put them on an equality with man in education, in dignity, and importance. The ministering faculties of woman He has exalted, and they have become her chief crown and beauty. She is surrounded with everything that can ennoble her with tenderness and affection, respect, culture, and refinement, with varied interests and wide scope for her most splendid energies.

She who has sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ is meek with His own humility. She is strong, not in herself, but in His strength. Her affections are fixed on things above, not on the excitements of the earth. She has perfect control over all her faculties; her temper, her prejudices, her prepossessions, her likings and dislikings, her whims and caprices, all are subject to the law of God in Christ Jesus. She has consummate tact, taste and perception, because she is not darkened by earthly motives at all, but illuminated in all things by the true light. She never considers whether she is beautiful or not in appearance, so that from within her smiles forth the image of her Lord. To her her dress is of no importance; she does not wish to look singular, but her wishes are attained when nobody notices what she has on. She lays no stress on the outward adornment of plaiting the hair or of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, so that she has the hidden beauty of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. To her her lot in life is of little moment so that she thoroughly fulfils every duty which comes before her as daughter, wife, mother and sister, which is clearly her own business and not another's.

The path of such an one through life is like a river, spreading blessings and happiness wherever it flows, even though it cannot be seen in the landscape, and when she dies it is as when a star falls from the firmament of heaven and leaves behind it a trail of glory.

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR.

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III. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Characteristics of a Faithful Minister.

And thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. EZEKIEL ii. 7.



HE prophet, and all who after him are charged with heaven's messages, are here exhorted to a strict fidelity to the words delivered unto them of God: 'Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.'

This, then, is to be the first care of those who minister in the gospel, that they speak the words of Christ and no other, that they call no man master, and no human dogma infallibly true; but that in all things they keep reverently, humbly, closely to the terms of their high commission: 'But thou, son of man, shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.'

II. But observe, another proof of his ministry which Ezekiel is required to give, is a high and holy superiority to the fear of man: 'And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks.' As I have already hinted, there is nothing in our modern modes of receiving a prophet's message which exactly answers to the treatment here described as received by Ezekiel. Advancing civilisation has produced more courteous reception for the gospel messenger at all events, but I am afraid that is all. The feeling towards the message is the same, it is the fresh truth and the fresh sorrow of yesterday. We say, Few will believe our report, or have the arm of the Lord revealed to them. The pure spiritual truth, as much now as ever, has to force its way through oppositions, and 'Marvel not if the world hate you,' said Christ to His disciples; and to the faithful prophet Ezekiel it was said, that he must expect as the ungrateful requital of his fidelity, 'that thorns should be with him, and he should dwell among scorpions.'

III. But I note a third form of ministerial faithfulness which Ezekiel was required to exhibit, namely, in the full and complete disclosure of the whole counsel of God. Some portions of his message the people

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might be willing enough to hear, but others they would forbear from hearing. He must make no difference, he must speak the Lord's words, and all His words: 'Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.' Moreover, part of the message was sure to be unwelcome to them, for, at the close of it, a roll of a book was given to him, 'and it was written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.'

The lesson to be learned from this part of our subject is, that in the proclamation of the gospel message there must be no keeping back, no handling of the Word deceitfully, no shunning to declare to the people all the counsel of God; 'whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,' we must so deliver our message as that all may know who are they that serve the Lord, and who serve Him not.

Pray for us, that we having spread the roll, this sure word of prophecy, enough for all and something for each, a precept of promises, of encouragement, and comfort, we may wisely distribute the bread of life. So only, as it is afterwards declared to Ezekiel, can we deliver our own souls.

D. MOORE.

IV ILLUSTRATIONS

Riches. I HAVE received from Taubenheim one hundred pieces of
1 COR. i. 4. gold, and fifty pieces of silver from Schart; so that I begin to fear lest God be giving me my portion here below. But I solemnly declare that nothing can make me happy except God.

Riches. THE riches of Christ's Divinity are unsearchable, and the
Eph. iii. 8. riches of His condescension are unsearchable, and the riches of His tenderness are unsearchable, and the riches of His redeeming love are unsearchable, and the riches of His intercession are unsearchable, and the riches of His faithfulness are unsearchable, and the riches of His supporting grace are unsearchable. These riches will never be expressed, even to all eternity. No; not by the noble army of martyrs, nor the glorious company of the apostles, nor the goodly fellowship of the prophets, nor the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, nor the innumerable company of angels, nor the spirits of just men made perfect, nor by all the ransomed throng of heaven. It will form their most ecstatic employment in heaven. Join, all ye happy throng, . . . join holy Abel and Enoch, upright Job, perfect Noah, souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, grand souls

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of Moses, Samuel, Elijah, pardoned David and Manasseh, soul of Isaiah the prophet. Join, all ye whose souls under the altar cry, 'How long, O Lord, wilt Thou not avenge our blood upon the earth!' Join holy Stephen and Polycarp, holy Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Rowland Taylor, and Anne Askew! Join brave Wycliffe, gallant Luther, stern John Knox, sweet John Bunyan, and praying George Fox; join pious Doddridge, and tuneful Watts, noble George Whitefield, holy Fletcher, exhaustless John Wesley, dauntless Rowland Hill, and grand though lowly Robert Hall. . . . Ye sweetest trebles of the eternal choir, ye million million babes who died without actual sin, join all your notes of praise! Pull out every stop of the grand organ of heaven, from the deep swell diapason to the lofty flute and cornet! Gabriel, strike the loftiest note of thy harp of gold! And let all the host of heaven, angels and men, begin the grand anthem, 'Worthy is the Lamb,' etc. And let the bold fugue be struck, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' And let the eternal Amen peal, and roll, and reverberate through all the arches of heaven! But never through all eternity shall the gathered host be able fully to express 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'!

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS IV. 17-32.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW IX. 1-8.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	EZEKIEL XIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	EZEKIEL XVIII. OR XXIV. VER. 15.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Grieving the Spirit.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. EPHESIANS IV. 30.



THAT the Holy Spirit is a person would be evident from these words, even if there were no other proof; or else how could He be grieved? And it is clear that He is a very kind and tender person; for we never grieve where we are not loved. It is a remarkable name by which S. Paul calls Him, 'the Holy Spirit of God.' And what a kind image is that which those words of our Saviour convey: 'He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you'; for that is very kind teaching, which helps the memory all the time it teaches.

It is a rule of our nature that love is sensitive, and the more affectionate we feel, the more quickly and the more keenly do we receive either pleasure or pain from the objects that we love. Like every other feeling of the mind, this is vitiated with the sin with which it mixes in the human heart. We all know how easily it can run into

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what is weak, and captious, and morbid, and wrong. It is a very difficult thing to be sensitive and not touchy. And, nevertheless, in itself it is not a poor thing that sensitiveness of the affections. It is evident that God the Father has it. The whole multitude of passages which, in compassion to human words, speak of the emotions of the divine mind, all show an infinite susceptibility on the part of God. And the same delicacy of moral touch was exhibited in the Lord Jesus Christ while He was upon the earth. And every Christian, too, as he grows in grace, finds the edge of his feelings grow finer and finer every day.

This feeling, then, the text shows to be a feature of the Holy Ghost, and this is what we wish to impress upon you, that every one of us, as many as have the grace of God, is always carrying within a Spirit, which Spirit is the very life and power of all his peace, and all his strength, and all his obedience. So exquisitely loving and so exceedingly sensitive is this Spirit, that He is affected by everything we say and think; and moved continually, according as we please or harm Him, either to joy or grief.

You must agree with me that this is a matter of practical importance; that if the inference which we draw from the words of S. Paul be correct, that such is the true character of the Spirit with whom we have to do every moment, and on whose continuance with us all our happiness depends, it is of importance whether that Spirit is receiving from us satisfaction or distress. Because, even if we forget for a moment our own self-interest in this matter, does not every principle of honour and gratitude constrain us to do all that we can, not to grieve, but to gratify that mysterious, but real and living Being, whose very temples we are, whose love to us is so exceedingly tender; to whom we owe, as its only Author, all our spiritual life; who has taught us all that we know of God and heaven; who has been, and will be again, our only Comforter in all our sorrows; from whom, as from a fountain, comes every ray of peace and hope that sparkles in our breast; and who only can carry out that fond desire awakened in our bosom; and make us fit for the glory and presence of Jesus Christ?

Now, though the subject is intensely deep, the fact appears to be absolute; that all through this coming week, for instance, whether we are conscious of it or not, we shall be all constantly communicating to that good Spirit some shades of delight or sadness; delight, when He sees godly emotions displayed; sadness, when He sees them slighted.

There are objects in nature, of which the fibres are so finely set, that they vibrate with every breath, and change with every change of atmosphere. But more fine than all are, we believe, the sympathies of the Holy Spirit. And is there not something thrilling in the

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thought that thus we are actually influencing the happiness of Him from whom all happiness flows to us?

To a dutiful child it will be always enough for the father to say, 'My child, you grieve me'; and shall it not be enough for us, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption'?

But here, as in everything, that which is for the glory of God is also for His children's good; and our interest and God's honour are always in the end identical.

See, for a minute, what the Holy Spirit is to you, according to the image which S. Paul is using. He draws his illustrations from a seal.

Some have supposed that this is the idea. When two contracting parties have made their agreement, it is customary to affix a seal to the document which embodies the compact; so when God, having bestowed His free love and favour upon a soul, and that soul believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and becomes reconciled to God, the Holy Spirit immediately occupies that soul. He endows it with certain graces. He imparts to it certain feelings. He forms an image of God there, faint but true. He communicates to it comfortable evidences of its own power and safety. He gives it earnestings of better things to come. And all this is as a seal upon it. It ratifies God's promises; it assures it of God's good-will; it authenticates God's words, and realises the sinner's expectation.

This, doubtless, is a very true and instructive view of the Holy Spirit, as coming in and sealing, by His different offices in the heart, the covenant of our peace. But I do not think that this is exactly the intention of the passage we are considering. The Lord Jesus Christ is, in some sense, the absent, certainly He is the invisible proprietor of the Church, *i.e.* of every believer's soul; and He has done with it, as we often do with very valuable property when we go away and leave it, He has placed it under seal till His return. The seal not only marks it to be His, but guards it also from any wrong or hurt; so that whoever would destroy or injure one of these precious blood-bought pearls of a forgiven soul, must first do that which it is not in the power of men or Satan to do, he must break God's seal.

Happy thought to some of you. You lie still in God's inviolable secrecy under His own seal; and every grace you attain, and every holy confidence you feel, is a strengthening of that seal which fastens you to life eternal. What that seal exactly is, we are not left without definite teaching; for the same Apostle explains it to Timothy when he says, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of

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Christ depart from iniquity.' From which we learn that it has, if I may so speak, two sides, making two impressions, which together complete the spiritual seal. The one, God's own free, eternal, electing grace, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His;' and the other, our own personal progressive holiness of life, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'

That this is the seal of which the Apostle is speaking to the Ephesians is confirmed by those words which he adds, 'Unto the day of redemption;' for, as soon as the redeemed soul shall take its redeemed body, the danger will be all over; the Proprietor Himself will have returned; and He will unseal the casket and take out His jewels, which will then be wanted to make up His crown. In the meantime, though it is certain, as we have seen, that no external power can ever invade the safety of any sealed soul, yet we must understand well, that every time we grieve the Holy Spirit we do tamper with that seal, and thereby weaken it, and whatever weakens that seal does, in fact, take from our closeness to God, lessen our evidences, and shake our salvation; for then there is room, as it were, for sin, and trouble, and fear, and doubt, to come in, and for peace and confidence to go out; whereas, when that seal of grace is strong, it is like the door of glory through which none can go out, and nothing evil, no pain, no sorrow, can ever come in.

Should we not always ask, whenever the mind loses anything of its sense of God's presence, and grows ashamed, or cold, or prayerless, Is not this because the Spirit has been grieved, and are not, therefore, my seals impaired?

Here can you see the paramount importance of guarding your souls by not grieving the Spirit, and the consequent necessity of always bearing in mind the inconceivable sensitiveness, which is the characteristic of that Spirit's nature.

Let me mention just one or two of the many ways in which the Spirit may be grieved.

The Holy Spirit is continually, as with silken threads, or His still small voice drawing the soul, and whispering to it thoughts of good, convictions of sin, aspirations after holiness, pious desires, soft, tender emotions, religious resolutions. These are His kind work in a man's breast. If you resist any of these, if you trifle with any of these, He is grieved; and He will show you that He is, and you will feel it.

Suppose, for instance, you feel an impulse for prayer, and you do not pray. Or, suppose you are impressed that you ought to do something, and you do it not; or you do it, but not at once,—it is the Spirit who spoke, it is the Spirit who has been dishonoured, and the Spirit is grieved.

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Whenever a sacred impression is permitted to die out in the mind, you will be sure that the Spirit is grieved.

The Holy Spirit is very jealous for the glory of Christ; whatever detracts, therefore, from Christ; whatever sentiment, or whatever practice that does not place Christ in His own pre-eminence as the true God and the only Saviour, grieves the Spirit.

Need I say that every approach to levity upon religious subjects, that every foolish habit of joking about sacred things, grieves the Spirit, and becomes, therefore, a very serious offence?

When you argue on the wrong side of a question, and so trifle with truth, and with your own conscience, the Spirit is grieved with you.

When you allow in your mind a wrong imagination, though there be no act, or direct intention to commit that act, yet you have grieved the Spirit by the imagination.

One idle word, or a stumbling-block cast by your inconsistency in another's way, or an opportunity of doing good thrown aside, or lost, these are things grieving to the Spirit.

Or, even less things than these, for what I wish you to remember, is the inexpressible sensitiveness of the Spirit, a look of the eye, a quick thought, a proud thought, a hot thought, a wandering thought, a wasted moment, grieves Him.

Would that in your chambers, would that in your businesses, would that when you are alone, would that when you meet and talk one with another, would that in the deepest recesses of the solitude of your own hearts, these words were always to be heard: 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.'

There are four sins against the Holy Ghost mentioned in the Bible. To grieve Him, to resist Him, to quench Him, to blaspheme Him. In this awful series, to grieve, is the first, thank God it is only the first; and so long as the Spirit is only grieved, the very fact that He is grieved, proves His unwillingness to go, and His gladness to come back.

Oh, consider well, that the first of a series is on the way to the last, it is already on the incline, and you know the abyss, the terrible abyss, that lies before you. Cherish, then (the only way not to commit any sin, is to take care to perform the opposite virtue), not only not to grieve, be it no more than levity, cherish the Holy Spirit.

You know how you would do to some dear friend with whom you are living, whom you love with some acute feeling, just act so with the Holy Spirit. Realise His presence, study His mind, believe His love, act out His slightest wishes, wait for His voice. Make it the first thought in everything, What will please Him? This will be His honour, and this will be your life.

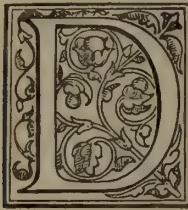
JAMES VAUGHAN.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

On the Supposed Duty of Giving a Religious Turn to Subjects of Common Conversation.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth ; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. EPHESIANS IV. 29.

I.  DOES God debar us from all pleasant discussion, all agreeable interchange of thoughts and information, unless we can twist and distort them into a kind of religious lecture? Are all the moments of a man's life to be equally grave and serious? Must He regard high spirits as a mortal sin, and gaiety of heart as destructive of all piety? Or, if they be innocent, are our ears never to be cheered and gladdened by their joyous and exhilarating effusions? If, for an instant, we admitted such positions, we must also conclude, that our Creator has implanted in us harmless and delightful feelings, which we must never gratify ; that His service is slavery, instead of perfect freedom ; that He is extreme to mark what is even said amiss ; and that every man is bound to make himself as gloomy, dull, and solemn as he can. Thanks be to God, we have not so learned Christ !

II. Exclusively religious conversation has a direct tendency to produce hypocrisy. Few of those, that might be under the necessity of spending their lives amongst Christians, who gave every conversation a religious turn, and who would be intolerant of lively discussions of general subjects, would like to appear, for any length of time, unaffected by the same heavenly feelings. They would not bear willingly the character of unspiritual, worldly-minded, or reprobate. They would shrink from the constant taunts or insinuations of their more pure, and zealous, and unearthly associates. They would at least endeavour and seem to partake of holiness, so abhorrent of our every day terrestrial concerns. They would, in short, act their part by assuming a disguise. But, if persons of some probity might thus be gradually tempted to take the garb of those with whom they lived, how much more readily would the crafty and designing adopt it, to serve their purpose, to cajole, deceive, and impose upon others ! Besides, in so cramped and unnatural a language, as such communication would

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soon establish, there would be a great variety of peculiar modes of expression, a phraseology that might easily supply the place of really pious feeling, and be taken up or laid aside, as occasion required, without the existence of a single religious sentiment in the heart. Thus would it open the doors, on one side, to cant, and hypocrisy, and imposition; and, on the other, expose Christianity itself to the ridicule and contempt of every species of infidels.

III. But, lastly, it would have the effect also of engendering spiritual pride. Persons, who were thus in the habit of talking only of religion, of expressing themselves in its language, and of being not merely powerful or thoroughly conversant in the Scriptures, but using its texts, similes, parables, illustrations, histories, and characters, as vehicles for their own actual ideas, feelings, narratives, and discourses, would beget imperceptibility in their own minds a notion, if not of being actually inspired, yet at least of very superior light, knowledge, and holiness. Such kind of intercourse would also generate an unusual degree of excitement, of fervent feeling, which might be mistaken for genuine sanctity of heart. The leading truths and doctrines of the gospel have in them, beyond a doubt, much of this stimulating power; and its very language flows not from the lips, without awakening the noblest feelings of the heart: we seem raised by the very utterance of them. And though such affections are not in themselves religion, yet they are the accompaniments of it; and self-love will readily give itself credit for genuine holiness, when it glows so warmly under its reflected heat. There is likewise an emulation created in such colloquial religion, which ends in spiritual pride. The initiated naturally strive in holy rivalry to exceed others in their scriptural diction, their sacred ardour and aspirations, their spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. They contend for an eminence in religious advancement, in its language and exterior; they naturally look down upon those who are less elevated, and insensibly value themselves above their fellows, for the shadow and the semblance, instead of the substance of Christianity. Thus, fancying themselves righteous, they come at length to despise others.

A man's religion, it is true, is chiefly an affair of individual interest: it is between himself and his God; and consists not in discussion and display, in texts and much talking. Yet, it must not be forgotten, that he is to consider his neighbour also, and the effect of his example upon others, to confess Christ before men; to 'offend not in word;' to lose no fair opportunity of edifying, comforting, and instructing. 'A word in due season,' observes the wise man, 'how good is it!' and 'how forcible are right words!'

A. B. EVANS.

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Grieving the Spirit.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. EPHESIANS iv. 30.

I. **W**HENEVER you grieve the Holy Spirit you do then, in the first instance, cause sorrow—it is God's own word—to Him to whom you are bound by every generous feeling to give only happiness. Few persons are sufficiently aware of the debt which they owe to the Spirit. They feel that the Father has testified His love by the wonderful surrender of His Son; the Son has given the strongest evidence of His affection by the abandonment for our sake of life and glory; but where is the sacrifice of the Spirit? Yet think you it is no sacrifice for a Being of perfect holiness and immaculate purity to come and dwell in such an abode as a sinner's heart, amidst the scenes of daily life—there, in the closest of all possible contact, to bear with all He hears and sees and feels—there constantly to be planting seeds which we root up, shedding light which we darken, drawing bands which we break, whispering voices which we drown, and offering prayers which we nullify—and to go on doing and enduring all this, with the most unwearied patience, for days and weeks and years—is not this sacrifice? Is it not a sacrifice which binds us to Him by the strongest obligations? Surely, therefore, it should be the first spring of our hearts—a sufficient motive to a holy life, even if there were no other—to give not grief but joy to Him who with such pains and at such a cost invites our love and claims our gratitude.

II. But have you considered, further, that every time you grieve the Spirit, you weaken the seals of your own security? The sequel of the text leads us to this connection of thought. We have time now only to refer to it. As soon as a man is pardoned, the Holy Spirit gives him, in the sense of that pardon, peace. As soon as a man has peace, the Holy Spirit gives him, in the strength of that peace, holiness. The peace is the consequence of the pardon, and the holiness is the consequence of the peace—and both are seals—the peace seals the pardon—and the sanctification seals the peace. But why do we call it a seal? Jesus Christ, the great proprietor, having bought us at an inestimable price, did with us as a man does with his treasures when he goes away for a season—He sealed us till He should return. The little precious casket of every believer's soul is thus sealed with the various impressions of the Holy Ghost, which carry all of them the sign and the image of the Master. By these seals he is evidenced to man, assured to his own conscience, and guarded against Satan and the world. Break any one of these seals, and your

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safety is, in the same proportion, diminished. You are left to yourself, uncertain of your own interest in all the promises, and to all your spiritual enemies, an easy and open prey; and every grieving of the Spirit is a defacing of an impression, and a loosening of one of the seals.

III. For there are few of us, I trust, who have not long since learnt that the secret of all true comfort and satisfaction in the world, is to carry within us the sunshine of God's love, which is peace and joy. And what is that sunshine but the unclouded indwelling of the Holy Ghost? Let that be clear, and then are the times of warm affections, bright, cheerful views, happy fellowships, prayers drawn out in sweetest exercises, the calm confidence, the nerved strength, the hope that plays, and the life that lives. But darken that inner light, place God a little away from you, let the Spirit abate something of His energies, and we all are too familiar with the consequences, the tide of every good and happy thought ebbs fast, dark shadows fall on cold affections and formal obedience, the spirit of a man is changed, his judgment is warped, his intellect grows feeble, his lower passions rise, the miserable chain of cause and effect runs on, while each fresh retiring of the Spirit paves the way to another sin, and every successive sin drives the Spirit into a further distance, fear lends itself to restlessness, and doubt draws on to scepticism.

IV. For mark it yet once more. There are four deep downward steps in the path to death: to grieve the Spirit is the first, to resist the Spirit is the second, to quench the Spirit is the third, to blaspheme the Spirit is the fourth. No one of these is ever reached but by going through that which is previous to it. But he who grieves the Spirit by a thought or an omission may soon resist the Spirit by some more overt act of direct opposition; and he who thus resists the Spirit wilfully may soon wish to put the Spirit out altogether from his heart, as a man quenches a light when he is enamoured of some deed of darkness; and he who has gone on quenching the Spirit is not far off from that daring and awful state which, uttering its blasphemous detestation, and giving vent to its horrible infidelity, is already verging towards a final and irrevocable reprobation. Let the consummation of the tremendous series teach the true character of the first imagination which lies upon its slope, and give emphasis to the solemn word, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'


JAMES VAUGHAN.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Absolution.

And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. S. MATT. ix. 2-7.

I.  HE original ground of the power of absolution, as ministered by men upon earth, is, it appears to me, to be sought in the passage before us. Our Lord, previously to healing the paralytic, had pronounced absolution upon him—nothing more and nothing less. ‘Son,’ He had said to him, ‘thy sins be’ (that is, for such is the force of the tense in the original, ‘they have been and are’) ‘forgiven thee.’ In the Old Testament, Nathan, the prophet, on a memorable occasion, had made a precisely equivalent announcement to the penitent David. ‘And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.’ It is observable that neither the merely human prophet under the old dispensation, nor the divine-human prophet under the new dispensation, say, ‘I forgive thee;’ nor do any such words occur in the formularies of the Book of Common Prayer. The words, ‘By Christ’s authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins,’ are indeed found in our office for the Visitation of the Sick; but this is by no means equivalent to ‘I forgive thee.’ To forgive is one thing; to absolve is another. To forgive sins is the part and inalienable prerogative of God, against whom, as the great legislator and judge of the conscience, all sin is committed. To absolve is to dispense and convey forgiveness to those who have the right dispositions of heart for receiving it; and this is the part of God’s messengers and representatives, whether under the old or new dispensations.

Now observe this language narrowly: ‘That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.’

He is not claiming to forgive sins as the Son of God, or in the same manner as God in heaven forgives them. To have done even

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this would not in His case have been blasphemy, would not have been snatching at a prerogative to which He had no right; for indeed He was 'God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.' But it was part of the mystery of Christ's humiliation to empty Himself of the powers and prerogatives of the Godhead, and to hold them in abeyance, so long as He was in the Flesh. So He here puts Himself forward simply as the Son of Man upon earth, in contradistinction to God Almighty in heaven. And His position is, that He, as Son of Man, the great-covenant head and representative of the human race, hath authority, while on earth, to dispense and convey God's pardons, to open the treasure-house of God's mercy to those whom He sees, by His searching intuition, to be fit recipients of it. And it appears from the finishing touch in S. Matthew's narrative, that the people understood His claim. 'When the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power (literally, such authority) unto men.' The authority I take to be the absolving authority of which our Lord had spoken just before; 'that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority upon earth to forgive sins.' They acknowledged (being constrained to do so by the miracle which had established His claim to it) that this authority was now deposited among men upon earth—given to Christ, by God the Father, for the behoof and benefit of the whole human race, of which He is the head.

II. We now proceed to a further stage in the consideration of the subject. We have seen that while upon earth, His glory veiled from mortal eye by a body of humiliation, our Lord, in His human nature, claimed the power of dispensing and conveying God's forgiveness.

Did He make any mention of this same power, when He was no longer 'upon earth,' when He had put off the natural and put on the spiritual body? Yes: the mention of this power, and the delegation of it to the Apostles, to exercise it in His name, as He had exercised it in the Father's, is one of the first words which fell from His lips after the Resurrection. On the first Easter day, at evening, He came to His Apostles through closed doors, and having shown them His hands and side, whereby remission had been meritoriously procured, He greeted them thus: 'Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me (sent Me to herald and dispense forgiveness of sins), even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

By these solemn words absolution may be said to have been instituted, as an independent ordinance of the Christian Church. This fundamental power was communicated in the first interview of our Lord with the Eleven.

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III. But it may be asked, 'Even granting that the Apostles had this power, does it appear that there was any entail of it to those who should succeed them in the government of the Church?' And here I make my appeal to the Book of Common Prayer. I am not reasoning with dissenters, but with Churchmen; and with Churchmen, if they are what they profess to be, the verdict of the Book of Common Prayer must be conclusive. The profession of Churchmanship, if it mean anything, cannot mean less than this, that he who makes it, accepts the Prayer Book as his commentary and interpretation of the Bible. Now the Book of Common Prayer directs the identical words, in which our Lord delegated to His Apostles the power of absolution, to be repeated separately to each man who is ordained priest.

But, while we stoutly maintain, on Scriptural and Prayer Book grounds, that the power of absolution has been by our Lord lodged in the Christian ministry, we hold, on exactly the same grounds, that the exercise of it should be for the most part public, and that only on very rare and exceptional occasions, where the tender considerate spirit of the Church of Christ dictates some concession to the cravings of a morbid conscience and a burdened heart, should it be administered privately. Where in the New Testament is there any trace of a private confession of sins made to an Apostle, or of any private absolution ministered by an Apostle, as the correlative of such confession? There is not the faintest whisper of such a practice from the first page of the volume to the last. S. Paul absolves the incestuous Corinthian on his repentance and humiliation; but he does it in a letter, which was meant to be publicly read in the congregation: 'To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ.' S. Peter did not say to Simon Magus, 'Come to me, and confess your sins, and receive absolution, as the beginning of a better life;' but he refers him entirely to God. 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.' Nor, though to him individually, by a special grant, the power of absolution has been delegated—'I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven'—does he allow a fellow-sinner to kneel before him; 'Stand up,' said he to Cornelius, 'I myself also am a man.'

Heartily believe in, in order that you may benefit by, the absolving power lodged in the ministry of the Christian Church. Look to the public absolutions of the Church, as really conveying the pardon of God to penitent sinners; and endeavour to appropriate them by faith.

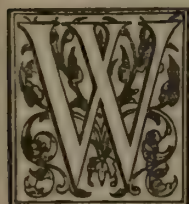
DEAN VAUGHAN.

AFTER TRINITY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Mental Idolatry.

Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?
EZEKIEL xiv. 3.



WHAT is the sin and the vice of which the prophet speaks, and how may we ourselves be guilty of it? The father of modern philosophy and science has shown us that there are in the mind of man, as man, natural idols, which act as impediments to his acquisition of knowledge and his search after truth. Till these idols are overthrown and broken in pieces and taken away, it is simply useless for man to pursue knowledge. His efforts will be neutralised and their results vitiated. He will not arrive at truth.

I. Now if this is so in the matter of human science, it is none the less worthy of our regard in the matter of divine truth and of the knowledge of God. We cannot know God, whom to know is eternal life, as long as these natural obstacles are not taken out of the way. We cannot serve Him acceptably as long as, instead of being dethroned, they are still set up in our hearts. Probably as a mere general statement no one would care to dispute this, because it is too self-evident and too much in accordance with acknowledged truth. It is only when we begin to apply the principles involved that objection will occur. What then is the practical bearing of this truth?

1. First, there must be a single eye to the knowledge of God. If we have not made up our minds that the one only object worth living for is God and the knowledge of God, we have set up idols in our hearts no less than the men in Ezekiel's time, who came and sat before him.

2. Again, not only must there be a clear and undimmed perception of God as the one sole object of our services, but there must also be a readiness to sacrifice anything in order to know and to serve Him. The man who is not prepared at any cost to himself to know and to serve God, is not prepared to serve Him at all.

II. But if this is true and in proportion as it is, there are certain general principles to which it behoves us all to give heed when we come to the worship of God.

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1. First of all we must empty ourselves of ourselves. We must come as though our present knowledge of God were as nothing, and as if God were still to be known and learnt.

2. One would fain pass by, but in a mixed congregation one dares not, the direct and obvious moral application which, indeed, is most prominent in the prophet's words, 'These men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face.' There is nothing which so infallibly prevents us from seeing the truth of God as secret sin. As long as sin, in one of its innumerable forms, lurks in the heart or on the conscience, the service of God will be a vain thing, because the pursuit of truth is a lie. It is that practised dishonesty, it is that cherished lust, it is that pampered self-love, it is that incurable indolence, it is that willingly defiled imagination, it is that malice and envy which vitiates all your worship and renders all your religion a lie.

STANLEY LEATHES.

Conversion.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. EZEKIEL xviii. 27.

THIS passage of God's word requires explaining, for we may take a very inadequate view indeed of its meaning, plain though it seems.

I. First of all, what is the wickedness of the wicked? One generally speaks of adulterers, fornicators, murderers, thieves, as being wicked men, but our Lord in His account of what He will do at the last day, declares that He will visit with the most appalling punishment, the selfish, the hard-hearted, those who have shut up their bowels of compassion from their needy fellow-creatures. So that, if we are to judge from their punishment, the selfish and covetous are the most wicked of men.

II. 'And doeth that which is lawful and right.' Now this 'doing that which is lawful and right' must be according to the dispensation. We are in a dispensation of grace, and so we must do accordingly. We must look to Jesus on the Cross as bearing our sins. We must plead with God, His Name, His Merits, His Intercession, and we must use the means of grace which He has given to us, especially the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, because in it He engages Himself to come and dwell within us.

III. 'He shall save His soul alive.' This does not, of course, mean

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that by so doing, he shall atone for his sin, or sanctify himself by his own power, but it means, that in the matter of his salvation, he is to be active, he is not, under pretence of giving Him more glory, to leave all to God, and fold his arms.


You, then, who are turning from sin, must come to God in every way which He has appointed, you must do what is lawful, according to the law, not only of natural religion, or of Christian society, but according to the law of Christ, you must come to Him to receive life, you must eat His Flesh and drink His Blood to have His life within you.

M. F. SADLER.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Gospel a Fire.

I am come to send fire on the earth. S. LUKE xii. 49.

I.  HE text calls the gospel a fire. And the first remark upon it must be, that a fire is a power. How it spreads, and glows, and rages, and devours; how it strides from point to point, from wood to stone, from gallery to wall, from floor to tower, licking, and devouring, and consuming, while a whole population cowers before it, and can only stand idly by, beholding and weeping over its work! Now I say that when the gospel is called a fire sent upon the earth, we shall do well to remember that a fire is a power; not a name, not an idea, not a poor, faint, creeping thing which may be disregarded and let alone, because at any moment human exertion can interpose and put it down, but a great, an active, at last a domineering and irresistible force, against which all the skill and all the strength in the world are as powerless as an infant's touch. Never suppose that the gospel is an insignificant or despicable thing; whatever else it is or is not, it is certainly not that. The gospel is a fire; and what a fire is, you know and you have seen.

II. But then we must admit, and we do so with sorrow, that there are places, as there are hearts, in which the gospel is not a fire. And here we reach a very anxious and a very critical question. A fire, we have said, is a power. Our Lord is here speaking of the gospel as a power for division. He says that one effect of His coming upon

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

earth, one effect of His leaving a gospel to be proclaimed when He was gone back to heaven, would be a spreading and desolating conflagration in human families. And He tells us how this will act. There may be a family, He says, of five persons. The gospel gets into that household. One of the family has fallen in with the true, living Word of God; perhaps from a minister casually heard; perhaps from a friend accidentally met; perhaps on a bed of sickness, or in a providence which has constrained reflection. Sin is now felt as a sore burden too heavy for man to bear. And the Saviour of sinners has at last revealed Himself as taking away and cleansing from all sin. Deep gratitude has taken possession of the relieved and tranquillised spirit; a gratitude which lives and moves within, and which cannot be let or stayed from working. Now, therefore, it cannot be altogether a secret that something has happened to that one of the five. With no wish to obtrude upon the rest either his new conviction or the experience through which he has passed to it, he cannot, if he would, and he would not, be precisely as in days of ignorance and thoughtlessness; he must do something, and he must forbear from doing some things, which before were left undone, or which before were done, 'according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that still worketh in the children of disobedience.' In that house henceforth there is division, discord, disunion; and the gospel is the cause of it. Henceforth the only alternative of union in that house must be, the backsliding of the one, or the conversion of the rest. Christ 'came to send fire upon the earth;' and in that house at least 'it is already kindled.'

You observe that it is just because the gospel is a power that this effect is produced by it. So long as the gospel was not (in that particular case) a power, so long it was not a fire; it caused no breach and no disunion. Therefore we are constrained to wish, even against our wish, for such signs of its working. If Christ does not send fire upon the earth, neither can He send peace into hearts. The fire is the sign of the peace. Because the sweet influence of the gospel has entered a heart, therefore division has entered a household. If we are contented, in any town or in any house, to let the gospel die out as a power; if, that is, we are satisfied with an orthodox belief, a regular worship, a decent conduct, and a practically worldly life, there will be no fire certainly; the gospel itself will be a mere balm, a mere soporific, a mere lullaby of the soul. It is only at a later stage than this, when one here and another there has been thoroughly awakened and aroused by the personal call of Christ, that the prophecy will begin to be fulfilled: 'I came not to give peace but a sword: I am come to send fire upon the earth.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

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The Gradual Miracle.

I see men as trees, walking. S. MARK viii. 24.

THIS particular miracle is the parable of our times.

I. It is so in reference to the things of God.

We pray indeed (who does not pray?) for grace to live as we ought, in the careful avoidance of known sin, and the diligent discharge of known duty; but do we seriously expect an answer to this prayer? Do we in our inmost hearts believe that an influence, a guidance, a control, a suggestion, a presence, call it what you will, is vouchsafed, is maintained, is continued, day by day, and through each day, as the direct reply of God to this petition? What can we say more, in regard to all these things, than that at best we 'see men as trees, walking'? that we have a dim, dull, floating impression of there being something in them, rather than a clear, bold, strong apprehension of what and whom and why we have believed?

II. And if this be so in the things of God, in matters of direct revelation and of Christian faith; it is scarcely less true in reference to the things of men; to our views of life, the present life and the future, and to the relations in which we stand to those fellow-beings with whom the providence of God brings us into contact.

The blind man must come to Jesus, and come in faith; and which of all of us has done so? It needs a desire to be saved, and it needs a willingness to be saved in Christ's way, and it needs a consciousness of deep defilement, and it needs a conviction that His Blood cleanseth from all guilt, and that His Holy Spirit can set us free from all sin, to bring a man under the healing touch even once. Oh, try and examine yourselves, 'and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God,' but honestly and in earnest, that ye be not, in the great day, 'condemned with the world'! Even the first act of healing is a gift 'above gold and precious stones'; despise it not! Power out of weakness, peace out of warfare, light out of darkness, sight out of dim, groping, creeping blindness, this it is to be the subject of the first healing. God grant us all grace to come for it to Him who is still on His throne of grace, to grant repentance and to grant forgiveness.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

NINETEENTH AFTER TRINITY

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

The Holy Spirit Grieved. THE following declaration occurs in the memoir of Lord Thomas Lyttelton, son of the celebrated writer on the Conversion of S. Paul : ‘I have had some serious conversations with my father, and one evening he concluded by recommending me to address Heaven to have mercy upon me, and to join my prayers to his constant and paternal cares for my reformation. These expressions, with his preceding counsels, had such an effect upon me that I had bent the stubborn sinews of my knees, when it occurred to me that my devotions might be seen through the key-hole. This drew me from my pious attitude, and having secured this aperture, I went to let down the window curtains also ; and just in the performance of the act, some lively music which struck up in the street caught my attention, and gave a sudden change to all my devout ideas. So I girded on my sword, and went to the theatre, where the entertainment soon dissipated all my gloomy thoughts.’

God’s Readiness to Forgive. AN old man and his wife in Flintshire were much annoyed by their neighbours’ cattle going over their fences into their wheat and grass, and thus causing great loss to the poor old people. David, the old man, got impatient at last, and one day, entering the house, he said to his wife : ‘Our neighbour’s cattle have been again in our wheat. I’ll make him pay the damage this time.’ ‘Don’t talk about paying, David. I will repay, saith the Lord.’ ‘No, indeed, He won’t,’ said David ; ‘He is too ready to forgive, a great deal, to do that.’

We may smile at David’s saying, but it was David who knew Him best. ‘Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.’

A Kind Word. A PRETTY story is told of Leonardo da Vinci’s boyhood. The little fellow was accustomed to buy such caged birds as he saw exposed for sale on the streets of Florence that he might set them free. The little Leonardo early learned the lesson that there is more genuine pleasure in a good act than in a good possession. There are, in the path in which each of us walk, many caged birds which we can set free. Of all keys to unlock the prison captives sympathy is the best. A kind word of praise, a hearty expression of good-will, a little help offered at the right time—none of these things cost much, but each may make the difference, to many a sad heart, between joy and sorrow.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

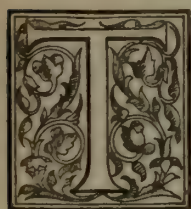
Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	:	:	:	:	EPHESIANS V. 15-21.
GOSPEL,	:	:	:	:	S. MATTHEW XXII. 1-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	:	:	:	:	EZEKIEL XXXIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	:	:	:	:	EZEKIEL XXXVII. OR DANIEL I.
SECOND LESSONS,	:	:	:	:	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Key of the World's Mystery.

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. EPHESIANS V. 14.



THE progress of men's thoughts in later times has had this among other results, that we have been made more alive to the seriousness and the difficulty of questions relating to our condition and place in the world, our very existence and destiny. Of course, in all ages, there have been persons who have asked these questions anxiously. There have been times, indeed, when they have convulsed the world. But there have also been long spaces and tracts of time when most men could go through life without having these questions forced on their minds, and without hearing much about them, except in a formal and matter-of-course sort of way. But now it is different. We are sent straight to nature and fact; and we are told to be real, and to think of what our words mean: and on this understanding these questions, questions of the whence and the whither of mankind,

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of ourselves, are felt, more than our fathers felt them, to be formidable ones. Whence and why do I come into life? What was I made for? What have I to do in this world? What is to become of me? What am I on the way to? These questions, so natural to ask, so easy to answer by rote, have brought home to many minds the profound depths of our real ignorance, and are listened to by many with beating or with aching hearts. Eyes have been opened to see the wonders and the mysteries which attend the most familiar things of life; the triple mystery of certain yet inexplicable facts: the mystery of sin, the mystery of pain, the mystery of will. And these perplexities and questions are no longer mere matters of abstract speculation, themes for philosophers in the study or divines in the schools to dispute them. They carry with them, to those in the street and market-place and by the domestic hearth, happiness or distress, hope or darkness, life or death.

And one thing further has been brought home to the consciousness of our generation: that is, that nature by itself cannot give the answer to them. There have been times in the history of thought when men were patient of theory and speculation, and hopeful of the powers of inference and deduction; and believed that from the data of our natural knowledge they might build up fabrics that would stand, of imposing certainties about all that concerns the nature and the relations of man to the universe, seen and unseen. Their failures, and a more real sense of what such knowledge means, have made us more cautious or less ambitious. Nature does indeed speak of God, of duty, of immortality. 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' Conscience cannot anywhere escape from its unearthly visitants, Right and Wrong, 'I ought,' and 'I ought not.' The human soul, in the very face of death, distinctly believes that it is not to die. But though nature does teach us, does prophesy of God, and hope, and man's prerogative of justice, of purity, of prayer, its answers to our questions are dark and imperfect. It refuses our cross-examination. it will not tell us what we want to know. it will not force its lessons on the unwilling. The gainsayer declares that it is silent. The doubter complains that it is ambiguous. Few can be sanguine enough to hope to wrest from nature the secret of its origin and government. It hardly helps man to understand himself. There have been times when men have seriously thought that in some of the rival religions to that of Jesus Christ something might be found worth attending to, which might clear up the mysteries of this world and life, which would tell men what they could not find out from nature about themselves, their law, and their fate. But those times are gone for ever, until human reason relapses once more into barbarism and ignorance. In no religion which the world has ever known is it possible even to

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imagine again a serious alternative faith to that of Christendom. What nature cannot tell us, no one will ever dream of going to extinct or obsolete religions to learn.

I. Here, then, we are—as we have begun keenly in these days to feel—in this little corner of God's immense universe, lost amid its infinite spaces, its countless suns, its depths and heights of being, knowing much, but with all our wonderful knowledge utterly unable to fathom just some of the questions which are nearest to us, which most interest us: so powerful, so mighty, so inventive—such at one moment we seem to ourselves—yet held fast, helpless and unresisting, in the grip of natural forces, in the deadly grip of pain, of death, of moral evil. We are encompassed by abysses of darkness down which an eye cannot pierce. We are prisoners to necessities which nothing can alter. With all our love and our longings, our aspirations of greatness, our ideas of happiness, our faith in righteousness, our sense of beauty, our delight in living, here we are—if all that we have and know is what this world can give us and tell us—orphans without a father or a family, or a home, brought we know not whence, and thrown by the storms of time on an unknown shore: creatures, with maimed and disproportioned nature, mocked by the contradictory and confusing accidents of their condition: beings, who with all their knowing, cannot make out what they are, matter, or mind, or spirit, a little lower than the angels, a little more unhappy than the beasts, and who, irresistibly drawn on to hope, yet seem to have no destiny. This, at the end of the account, after all allowances made for the greatness of what man has done, the extent of what man has known, the happiness which man has tasted, this is the sad and dreadful consciousness of the heart, if the world and life are nothing but what nature can tell us of.

Whence come we? Where are we? Whither are we going?—who can help asking—and who can bear the blankness of darkness, which comes on him when he tries to think of the answer as given by the clear and unhesitating informants which tell him of the certainties of mathematics, of the measure of the earth and sun, or the laws of chemistry and mechanics. It is impossible to exaggerate the hopelessness of such an answer. Have we indeed nothing besides?

Ah, yes! encompassed in mystery as we are, as we always must be, there is in the darkness a point of light. Little as we know of the infinite around us, that dreadful sense of not knowing what we are, and why we are, that dreadful sense of despairing orphanhood, of being fatherless, uncared for, purposeless, has passed away from the world. It has so passed away from our familiar thoughts, that it requires an effort to realise what we should be if we actually were

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alone—absolutely alone—with nature, as we know it. ‘The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.’ No one who really thinks, no one who really feels, can make light of the perplexities which even still surround the things which most interest us in life. At every turn we are made to feel how little we really know about them: how different they are, and turn out from what we had thought; what a strange, surprising, disappointing, baffling scene we are going through; how tangled are all its threads, how shallow and superficial our judgments and reasonings about it. There are those whom it seems to stun and confound and drive to despair. But whatever we know or do not know, we know this, we may know this, if there is such a thing as knowledge in the world—we know—surely, we know as certainly as we can know anything we have not seen with our eyes—we know that One has come, as no one ever came to the world before, who came to make quite clear and quite certain a number of questions on which, in spite of all efforts, men have been in the deepest perplexity; who came to tell us whence and why we are here, and what we have before us in the after-time. He came to tell us, once for all, that we are not orphans and castaways, drifting about on the boundless sea of the universe; He came to tell us of ‘our Father who is in heaven,’ even God. We know that He is come, we know that He died. We know—unless all human knowledge of the past is a vain and unprofitable dream, and all its grounds and conditions, and combined guarantees, deluding and misleading phantoms—we know that He is risen from the dead. Some one—we know who He is—has been alive after having been dead. Some one among the sons of men has conquered death. We know that this tremendous and unimaginable event has changed not only the course, but the aspects of the world and human life. Neither are, nor can be, what they were before it; neither are, nor can be, what they would be without it. Whatever else we don’t know, whatever else may disturb or vex us because we don’t know it, here is that which makes the whole difference to man’s thoughts, about his place, his ignorance, his anxieties. ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ He has come, and He has spoken. He has given us light by His victory over the grave, and in that light all that He was, and all that He said, and all that He promised stands before us in the illumination of a divine unveiling. ‘God manifest in the Flesh’—‘we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, when He dwelt among us full of grace and truth.’

II. The answer, so far as it goes, is as clear, is as real, as the question. It is given us in terms which belong to this present state of being;

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terms of which we can measure the meaning and the force; terms which meet us in the sphere to which we are accustomed, the sphere of experience. For we know what death is, and we know what must be meant by 'one being alive from the dead.' We ask, what nature and experience cannot tell us, whence and from whose hands we came. One from the dead tells us—it is no mere guess or surmise or inference of our own—tells us that we come from our Father's hand and are ever in our Father's hand. We grope in darkness among the tremendous problems of moral evil, of the sins of the world, of the sin of our own soul. One from the dead is come, and with clear unwavering tones tells us that sin indeed is a reality; that He died for the sin of men and that its forgiveness and its cure are in His hands. We ask, we consider, what is death? that 'parting of the breath' behind which none living has ever been, beyond which none living can imagine anything. He is come from the grave itself, from the depth and silence in which the millions of the generations of the dead are lying, in which all trace of them has perished—and He tells us, and shows us in His own person, that death is but an incident and an appearance; that there is life beyond it—life and all the highest things that pertain to life, life with its purpose fulfilled, life and righteousness, life and immortality. We stand silent and without answer, when the sufferers ask us why they suffer; what is the meaning, or the justice, or the use, of these tremendous dispensations of agony, unmitigated and without remedy, which seem to visit without distinction the innocent and the guilty; the misery of the helpless child, the pangs endured by the brute creation. They have no account to give to us of their terrible presence, of their unaccountable assaults; pain and its phenomena are ultimate facts, insoluble as they are awful. But this we know, that He who was the conqueror of death and established by that conquest His title to be the redeemer of His creatures, drank together with them the cup of pain. Sinless, He submitted to its torturing. Almighty, He bent beneath its yoke. All-perfect, He accepted whatever purpose it had to fulfil in the Father's order. Till the 'times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' we must be content with twilight, we shall often open our eyes only to perceive how thick is the darkness, we must be prepared to endure, 'the burden of the mystery,'

'The weary and the heavy weight
Of all this unintelligible world.'

Its riddles are not for our unriddling; its enigmas are not meant for explanation in the days of time. But in all the darkness there is this great point of light. It is certain, if anything is certain in history, that He is risen. Our refuge, our only refuge, from the

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agonising mysteries of the world is in His empty grave. We know now in whose world we are. We know that it is one risen from the dead,

‘Who brought us hither,
And holds the keys of whence and whither.’

III. And we know more. We know that He is come, and has conversed with men. But further, we know what He who had all power in heaven and earth has promised, even to us. He has promised, though He went away, yet still to be with us in our course through the storms and the pains of life. ‘Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world.’ ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.’ We have Him who once appeared in the world among us. We have Him who was dead and is alive for ever. We have Him, to our comfort and blessing and guidance, if we will; but whether we will or no, we have Him with us, the King and Master of all living men. We have Him still, though behind the veil of this mortal state. He is here behind the veil of ignorance, though we recognise Him not, though we deny Him, though we persist in living as though He had never been. He is here, behind the veil of sin, behind that dark poisonous cloud, which day by day goes up from the face of all the earth, between the souls of men and the purity and light of God. He is here, behind the veil of pain, behind its apparently capricious and meaningless tyranny, its cruelties which mock explanation, its tortures for which there is no cure, its grasp from which there is no deliverance. He is here, behind the veil of our long-standing quarrels and divisions, our hopeless misunderstandings, our cherished antipathies, our blind zeal, our shocking profanations of the sacred name of religion. He is here, unseen, but He is here, watching us, judging us. He is still here, that mighty Lord, who once rose from the dead. He is here, though they know it not, to the proud and the insolent. He is here, to the humble and the meek. He is here, waiting to reveal Himself, waiting to bless, in the secret chamber, on the bed of sickness. He is here to meet us, in spite of our denials, in the Eucharistic Feast: amid the strife of tongues, amid fierce and sometimes brutal controversy, the incredible rancour, the incredible weaknesses, the incredible bitternesses, which have so strangely gathered around His Sacrament of Union, as if the scene of the Passion was continued around it to this hour. He is there, beyond the storms, with His words of peace and hope, ‘Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ For He has promised to be with us for ever, knowing all that this mortal life was to be to us; knowing its darkness, knowing all its

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deadening temptations, all the sophistries of its despair. And every Easter, as it comes, renews the call and the promise, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

All things, all men, at this present time, science, nature, religion, the enemies and critics of our faith, and its interpreters, are calling on us to be real and true. Let us be real and true about this great call to light. Let us be real and true, true to fact, true to ourselves as to what the world and life would be without Christ's Death and Resurrection, as to what they are with Christ alive from the dead. With Him we have that for which we may well join with the alleluias of angels; without Him we are—words cannot exaggerate, words cannot express it—we are of all men most miserable—more miserable, we, the heirs of all the ages, the victims of such a delusion, than the most debased of savages. We believe Him. Let us grasp the thought that amongst other realities of life, this, too, is real, that He who is so mighty and living, said that He should ever be with us, is, therefore, with us at this day in as real truth as He was with His friends in Galilee. Let us beseech Him, as they did, to give us, what is more than mere knowledge and assent, more than conviction, to give us the effort, the energy, of faith; to strengthen our wills which so often resolve, and so often fail; to open our eyes which see not, to quicken our hearts which feel not, that the veils of bewilderment, of sense, of custom, of sin, may not hide this from our hope and love. May He help us to S. Paul's wish in true earnest and to its fulfilment, that longing desire spoken in the name of all his brethren, in all that it may mean, in all its wonder: yes, if it must be so, in all that is awful and tragic in it, for no human life is secure against tragedy: 'that I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if so be that I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

May He, who is the Resurrection and the Life, raise us up to newness of life, supplying to us ways of repentance according to our needs. May the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect us in every good work to do His will, working in us what is acceptable before Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever.

DEAN CHURCH.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Walking circumspectly.

See then that ye walk circumspectly. EPHESIANS v. 15.



HERE is a grace too little thought of, which, nevertheless, belongs eminently to a Christian man. Let not any man think lightly of it, as though it were a mere heathen virtue. I mean, a cautious exactness.

It is this of which the Apostle is speaking in my text. For so it would be most literally translated, 'See that ye walk accurately, or exactly.'

Now, it is in itself so very beautiful, it so commends religion before the eyes of all men, that we can scarcely do a more important thing than consider what is the nature of the exactness of a Christian's walk, and how it may be attained.

I. Are we not walking on the narrow edge between the two eternities of heaven and hell? Is not every thought we think to meet us again at the bar of God? Is not the glory of God committed to every action that I do, and every word I say? And has not everything I say and do a consequence, which is to spring up and live after I am dead and gone, beyond my grave, for ever and for ever?

Who then, but a sceptic, or a madman, feeling himself in the midst of all these solemnities, will despise the warning, 'See that ye walk circumspectly'?

It is the glory of omnipotence to do everything perfectly; it is the duty of grace to do each proportionately.

Need I say that the Christian must be a man very exact in his accounts? As he hopes he is with God, so he must try to be with his fellow-man; to be out of debt; to owe nothing but love.

And this should be his temporal as well as his spiritual rule, that were he called away by any summons, however short, he might be able confidently to say, 'I have no account unsettled, with God or man.'

But not only in these negative ways will the Christian be a man who walks accurately out of doors; but in every engagement he will aim to be more punctual in every undertaking, more earnest in every obligation, more exact, as a man who has always these words before

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his eyes, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'

Therefore he has his definite labour of usefulness and love. And if he undertakes anything, he considers himself bound to persevere in it. He is as a man not variable and uncertain, but as a man should be who stands upon a rock. He is a man so careful of time that he will not let a moment drop, because even moments are portions of the time of eternity. What others waste without a thought, he will love to cultivate. It is a pure inaccuracy which is not accurate about the little threads. He knows how easily, by little threads, virtue slides into vice. He knows what a little step it is from the middle out into an extreme; and he finds that this exactness helps him in one thing very much, in overcoming besetting sin.

If any man wishes to overcome a besetting sin, let him be accurate with himself. For there are paths in the journey of life where even the circumspect man must walk still more circumspectly.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Fulness in the Holy Spirit.

But be ye filled with the Spirit. EPHESIANS V. 18.

I. 'BE ye full in the Spirit.' The phrase suggests a picture, and lends itself easily to material illustration. The disciple is presented in it as a being who is, on the assumption, in the Spirit, but who, being so placed, yet needs this precept to be filled. The Holy Ghost surrounds the man as an atmosphere, or let us now say as an ocean. Not only is He, of course, omnipresent, but up to a certain point He is around this Christian in the way of special grace; the man would not be a living Christian at all if the Spirit had not taken hold of him, and as it were wafted him into saving union with his Lord, in repenting faith. And doubtless also the man is thus not only in the Spirit; the Spirit is in him. For this work of the call, the attraction, and the union, how was it done? Not mechanically, but by the Holy One's secret action at the springs of thought and will; by His internal discovery to the man of himself and of his Saviour.

Yet, for this disciple who is within the Spirit, and within whom the Spirit lives and works, there is yet room for the precept of the Apostle, 'Be full in the Spirit.'

What does it mean? Illustrations of the spiritual by the material

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are always to be used with caution, or they may lend themselves to the gravest errors. But what is human language, after all, if not a mass and maze of material imagery, to be used in the transmission of even the most subtle and vanishing thought? So the aid of illustration not only may but must be used in the spiritual region. Can we not use it here? I see suggested in the words before us, 'Be full in the Spirit,' a material picture somewhat of this fashion. A vessel, an earthen vessel, is plunged into a crystalline sea; it is in the pure flood, surrounded by it at every point. But it carries in it, still unexpelled, a charge of atmospheric air, and it is so placed that, though its mouth is open to the water, this charge of air—of tainted and malarious air, we will suppose—cannot escape. What is the result of the conditions? By dint of compression, indeed, the water makes some inroad on the air, but the air effectually excludes the water from the vessel as a whole. Not till some way is found for the discharge of the obstructing occupant will there be room in the vessel for the fulness of the surrounding sea. In proportion to such discharge will be the influx; as the vessel is evacuated, so will it be filled.

Look at the spiritual facts indicated by the imagery of the vessel and the sea. The man has come, through grace, to the foot of the Cross, to peace with God, to living union with Him who is our Life. But in the sequel of things, as he now goes on to live his life in the flesh, day by day, certain obstructive matters, whatever they may be, are found remaining in the inner world; and these restrict the free inflow of the blessed life and power which yet has touched him. The human vessel is in the heavenly stream, but there is that in the vessel which, from the point of view of the man's responsibility and moral choice, keeps the stream out from a part, perhaps from large parts, of the inner life. The grace of God, that is to say, the God of grace in saving action, is something to the man; perhaps He is much to the man; but ah, how far He is from what He is to be, from what He may be, if His creature is but willing! And the experience of what it is to have it otherwise is an experience which it is the creature's duty, as well as glory, to obtain: 'Be not drunk with wine; but be ye, in the Spirit, full.'

II. The matter is as practical as possible. Here is a commandment, not merely a counsel, but a commandment, of perfection. We have remembered, somewhat in the abstract, how its fulfilment is to be compassed. What does it mean, when we translate the abstract into the concrete, the principle into life, into the life of ourselves to-day? Are we, in some hour of deeper recollection, constrained to lament that whatever is intended by spiritual fulness, it is scarcely likely to find its counterpart in our experience? that too often, on

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the other hand, we are straitened in ourselves? that a sense of religious weariness and disappointment is not unknown to us? that the things which belong to our heavenly Master are not quite those which fill us? that ours is not quite a glad conscious life, stirring in the depths, and expressed spontaneously upon the surface; the heart's abundance speaking through the lips, and not the lips only, but the temper, the tone, of an habitual faith, and hope, and love? Are we saddened by the confession to ourselves that the fulness and pressure of external labour and intercourse find no adequate response in an inward upspringing fulness of divine communion, such as beyond all other things strengthens the will by leaving a deep calm around it, and clears the judgment by a wonderful disencumbrance of anxieties from the heart? Is the fountain low beneath its brim, whereas the Master of old, sitting by the Syrian well, promised to His disciple that the water He would give should be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life?

All too often, in the Christian life, where there is complaint of spiritual shallowness and drought, there lies in the recesses of the soul some unsettled controversy, unsettled between the man and his God; something undone, something indulged in, something curtailed off from the direct gaze of even the inward eye, yet which it owns to be there by not looking, if it can help it, in that direction.

If so, we will not waste the moments on regret. 'Take ye away the stone,' and the holy fountain will flow, with no assistance of our hydraulic enginery. Let the earthen vessel, in the self-surrender made possible by the sight of Christ, give release to the imprisoned and imprisoning air; and no pressure on its part will be needed to let in the waters of the Pacific Sea of God.

H. C. G. MOULE.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Marriage of Christ to His Church.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. S. MATTHEW xxii. 2.



HE marriage of Christ is the mystery of the Church, and it belongs to the initiated. To those who stand in the outer circle of thought, it is a word and a fable. To those who are within, it is the simplest and the grandest of all possible realities.

There was a certain King—King of Kings, and Lord of Lords—who, from all eternity, planned a marriage for His only Son. It was not good for Him that He should be alone, in a blessed paradise though He lived, and though He had all things round Him to minister to His joy. He was not Himself content with a solitary happiness. He desired to have that with Him which He could call His own, and which He could cherish, and which He could make happy, for ever. And by a strange and wonderful process it was effected. That Son of God fell into a deep sleep, and no sooner was He fallen into that sleep of death, though not a bone of Him was broken, but out of his side, nearest to His heart, there flowed that Water and that Blood which make, nay, which are, His appointed bride. For no one can form part of that body, which is the help-meet of Christ, until that Water and that Blood are in them.

I. In this manner, after the deep counsel of Almighty God, first came into existence that Church, which, in the fulness of time, was to be united to Christ in the holiest and the dearest of bonds.

Do you ask, Whence the Church sprang? I answer, From the everlasting purpose of God. Do you ask, When it was born? I say, At the moment of Christ's death upon the Cross; the Water and the Blood, the cleansing and the life, the pardon and the grace, made it. As Jesus is its object, Jesus is its author. Alone, He is its cradle, alone He is its home. And so is it 'bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh,' in all the sympathies and all the oneness of His wonderful nature. And it is called Ishah, because it is taken out of Ish; the Church, because it is taken out of Christ.

Such was the bride's birth, the deep origin of the spiritual marriage which there is betwixt Christ and His Church, as they lay for ever in the mind of God.

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II. But now we are to consider how this union—of which an marriage is the intended allegory—actually takes place between Him and us.

And here we observe again that the first mover is, as it ought to be, the Lord Jesus Christ. The wife does not seek her husband; but the husband seeks his wife. We do not begin with seeking Christ—we could not if we would, we ought not if we could, it would be unseemly—but He begins by seeking us. And who shall say how long, how patiently, how lovingly, how winningly, He woos the souls He seeks. He fixes His heart upon us, He selects us, He prefers us, He goes about to have us. It is not we who ask Him, but He who asks us, with such infinite condescension and tenderness, ‘Lovest thou Me? Wilt thou be Mine?’ Marvellous fact, but true as it is marvellous, that He, ‘the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,’ should be the one to take the initiative with such a poor, fallen, unlovely thing as we, and make His suit to us, that we may be His. But so it is, and much more than there can be in any type, however drawn out; for all the while is He not putting the very will into us that we should consent to His overtures? Else, did He not, is there one in heaven now who ever would have ‘seen any beauty in Him that they should desire Him’?

III. See what Christ is doing for you. For then only you will be satisfied to do all you ought for Christ, and be all you ought to Christ, when you remember all His wonderful engagements which He is fulfilling for you. He has paid all your debts, and you are no longer liable. When He took you, He made Himself responsible to the great creditor of us all; and well has He cancelled the obligation. Before you knew Him, you were ‘sold under sin,’ going down into the pit. Now He has ‘found a ransom,’ and ‘lifted you up, and set you among princes,’ and you are the freest of the free. And He has undertaken for all your wants, whatever may befall you. He has undertaken all charges: if you are poor, to supply you; if you are ignorant, to teach you; if you are perplexed, to guide you; if you are hurt, to avenge you; if you are calumniated, to vindicate you; if you are sad, to cheer you; if you fall, to lift you up again; if you could die, to revive you. On Him you lean always, to Him you speak every moment every secret, from Him you hear the softest accents, as though there were no other but He and you only in the world; you are His, and He has made you beautiful in His own eyes, and in His Father’s eyes, and in the eyes of all that is pure and good in either world; and He has robed you with the most costly arrayment, and He has decked you with the loveliest of jewels, and He has brought you to sit down in His banqueting-house which He has prepared for you, and He holds you up to the admiration

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of His creatures. And all that is His is yours; He has made over to you, by the surest title-deeds, the whole property of heaven and of earth. And more, He has given you Himself. He is yours, He has written upon you His own new name; He has identified you with all His interests, and all His happinesses, and all His hopes. He will never rest without you at His side, but you shall look in His face, and you shall say those dear, happy words for ever, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His,' for you shall never be divided.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Daniel's Self-Denial.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. . . . But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.
DANIEL i. 5, 8.



THE opening chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel contains the key and clew to all that follows, for it tells us of what stuff that man was made who gives his name to the book. It introduces us to the Jewish captivity in Babylon, when Nebuchadnezzar, the king, after successfully besieging Jerusalem, and taking Jehoiakim prisoner, carried off to Babylon, among other things and persons, the gold and silver of the temple, and the *élite* of the young men of Judah, the choicest of the young men for character and ability, to be trained for the service of their new master. 'Children in whom was no blemish, but well-favoured and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the wisdom of the Chaldeans.' The policy of Nebuchadnezzar must be admitted to have been admirable. He clearly wished to avail himself in the interest of his own kingdom, of the best talent and capability of the kingdom he had conquered. He first of all chose out the best material, and then proceeded (as he hoped) to subject it to the habits and discipline which should naturalise it in its new country. As he had poured the treasure taken from the temple of the God of Israel into the temple of his own god, so he hoped to adapt the human treasure he had acquired to the purposes of his

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religion and its institutions. His object clearly was to take these young men, Daniel, and his three companions (familiarily known to us by the names of their adoption, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego), and by exposing them to influences as different as possible from those of the race they came of, to acclimatise them gradually to the language, the learning, the manners, and the morals of their new country. He thought they might be cured, not only of all home-sickness, as ordinarily understood—the wasting regret and longing for Zion, and the God of Zion—but of those home ideas and affections which are at the root of all patriotism worthy of the name.

I. And among other means which the sagacity of their royal master devised for the accomplishment of this purpose, was that they should be fed, as well as taught, after a fashion to which they were not born. Besides the learning and the wisdom of the Chaldeans that was to be daily instilled into them, they were to be provided daily with food from the king's table, that fine wheaten bread, and game, and exquisite wine, which we know to have been the prerogative of these Oriental sovereigns. Nominally, the motive assigned for this special treatment of his prisoners was that they should grow physically strong and well-liking; that they should be well nourished as befitted the attendants of a court. But can we doubt that the wily king was not regarding only the bodily condition of his pupils, but knew well enough that if he could but once acclimatise them in this respect also, if he could once foster a liking, an appetite for these flesh-pots of Babylon, and make these things, at first luxuries, to become in time necessities, he would have gained a still closer hold upon the future services of his young counsellors and administrators? And he had no suspicion that the body and the mind, or whatever he held to be the seat and origin of wisdom, needed any separate treatment and regimen. Doubtless he honestly believed that body, soul and spirit would thrive alike, and together, upon this more generous diet. It lay altogether outside of his philosophy that dainty bits may

‘Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.’

But he little knew the man with whom he was dealing. The young student in the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans may well have felt the temptations of his novel position, for the brain is not independent of the rest of the animal economy, and the stimulant and support of the king's meat might have seemed even necessary and allowable to sustain him in the ardent pursuit of this new learning. But he had a past experience to which he could appeal. He had laboured and striven thus far upon simpler fare, and he would make no change, ‘he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he

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drank.' And when the officer who had them in his charge was afraid not to carry out the king's orders, and remonstrated, 'why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort?' the answer was ready: We can work and serve the king, not worse, but better, on the food we have been used to, on which we have hitherto learned the great lessons of life. 'Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.'

Which things are an allegory, not the less so because they are incidents in the actual experience of a great man who once lived and left his mark upon his time and country. They are one of the memorable declarations in the history of man as a spiritual being, of the eternal connection between plain living and high thinking.

II. But I have said that this history is for us an allegory. The king's house, and the king's meat have a wide-reaching moral and meaning. The very name of Babylon itself has already, in the vivid imagination of men, been seized upon to express certain modern parallels. The great metropolis was long ago nicknamed the 'modern Babylon,' and in its wealth and splendour, in the height to which the arts and resources of human capacity have been cultivated, the parallel is ingenious and happy. But the parallel has another side to it than that of wealth and the cultivation of the liberal arts. We shall miss altogether the deeper lessons of the story of Daniel, unless we recognise strongly that Babylon, for us, is not a city or a place at all, but a spirit, the spirit of our habitual surroundings. The ideals, the habits, the standards, the hopes and fears, among which we are content to live; the atmosphere of which we are content to breathe; these constitute for us, whether we are young men, just arrived like Daniel from purer, wholesomer surroundings, into the glare and glitter, the luxury and beauty, the stimulating food, and the stimulating culture and ideas, of some new centre of life and action; or whether we are living and travelling elsewhere (for we change our climate but not ourselves, for all the seas we cross) these constitute for us our Babylon. There may be no defined and concrete head and king of this country, no one building that can be called the king's house; no one diet that can be called 'the king's meat.' Yet there is a governing power which we may be living in subjection to, though we do not see anywhere set down its rules and codes; there is an abode, within whose walls or jurisdiction we may be cabined, cribbed, confined; and there is a nourishment, on which, if we try to support the life given us, we may grow skilful in all the learning of Chaldeans, but not in all the wisdom of God.

III. To live in Babylon, and yet to be the true citizen of a far different country; to be in the world, yet not of it; this is for us the translation of Daniel's action with regard to the king's meat.

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The very object and design of supporting him from the king's table was to wean him from the food of his native land. He was pressed to eat it in order that he might exchange the knowledge of Zion for that of Babylon. And he would not defile himself by so doing. He would live apart, with the nourishment and the associations that were bound up with the service of a very different master; lest in this new world of his exile he should forget the imperial palace whence he came. The refusal of Daniel was the counterpart of the refusal of the citizens in the parable to acknowledge the headship of Christ. The resolve of Daniel and his companions was just this, 'Though we are in the country, and the policy, and the religion of Nebuchadnezzar, we will not have this man to reign over us.' And in order that they might preserve their faith in their own God, they would not live a life that was organically bound up with the god of Nebuchadnezzar. For that would be to serve two masters; and two masters men cannot serve. This must surely be the primary lesson of the story of Daniel; the lesson which sounds, when so put, a truism, and one of the most obvious of truisms. As long as we conceive of two masters, only as defined individual forms, two rival kings, two rival lawgivers, two rival religions or opposing moralities, it seems the clearest of all clear things that the service of two is irreconcilable and an impossibility. But the great saying of our Lord was not so framed; He said, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' There was and is no such personality as mammon. Jesus used the word as a personification, not for wealth merely, but for all that wealth leads to and encourages; the splendour, whether material or intellectual, that makes the attractiveness of Babylon. And this abstraction, this diffused and intangible influence and contagion, abroad in the world, and in the very air we breathe, this, hardly discernible by the eye and sense, may yet be the hardest of hard masters, and the very rival of God Himself. For if we serve it, we cannot serve Him.

IV. There are many Babylons in which it may fall to our lot to take up our abode, and make choice of our life's gods. There are the Babylons of great cities, where boundless wealth and luxury are found, and boundless pleasure for eye, and ear, and fancy. There are the Babylons (may we not say it?) of great centres of education, where the god of the country takes a fairer and loftier shape—the god of knowledge—the Nebo—the god of the learning of the Chaldeans. It is not the grosser idolatries, the rites of Baal and Ashtarothe, that the nobler and better spirits among us have to guard against, but the more specious idolatry of things in themselves justly beautiful and engaging, the ever-developing knowledge and culture of a still growing civilisation. Not idols, not necessarily idols, unless they have dethroned the likeness of the true Father of our spirits; unless they

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have intercepted the light that once came down from Him to lighten every man that is born into the world. Difficult it is, we know it, in any strength of our own to live in Babylon, and not to be of Babylon. So difficult, unless we set ourselves, with the ever-shadowing might of a power not our own, to walk with God. To traverse the common ways of men, and eat temperately of their common meat, and to do the duties and pursue the studies that are the immediate purpose of our being here, and yet to be strengthened by another food that the world knows not of; this is to live as Daniel lived, and those two whom the prophet Ezekiel coupled with him as the typical children of God: 'these three men; Noah, Daniel, and Job.' Noah, the man who, in the midst of his own corrupt civilisation, walked with God. Daniel, who, in the land of the stranger, carried with him his native air of piety and purity. And Job, the man who, assailed by the sophistries of his well-meaning friends, yet would not distrust God, because he had convictions based upon a life's experience, and they had only the conclusions of a neatly constructed religious theory.

CANON AINGER.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Inspiration.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

- I.  T is well known that the Jews divided their sacred writings into three classes, which are sufficiently indicated by the expression in our Lord's statement to His disciples that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him. Those three classes, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms and sacred writings, were regarded as representing different degrees or kinds of divine influence. The law was regarded as actually dictated, if not written, by God Himself, and the extent to which this dictation was conceived to extend is strikingly illustrated by the pathetic conception that the account of the death of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy was written down by Moses at the divine dictation. But with the prophets and Psalms it was recognised that the

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individual personality of the inspired person was maintained, however it might be overpowered by the Divine Spirit. This individuality was regarded as still more distinctly preserved in the case of the Psalms, and, on the whole, the ancient Rabbis seem to have combined with a profound recognition of the divine supremacy in the production of the Scriptures a clear sense of the reality of human co-operation. But a different conception arose in Alexandria, probably from association with the heathen conception of divine influence. The Greek idea of divine communications was associated with that of a sort of ecstasy in which the priest or priestess lost all self-consciousness, all self-control, and became the mere passive organ of the Divine influence, just as the musical instrument is struck by the hands of the musician and has no independent action of itself. A similar conception is found in one of the earlier Christian fathers who had been brought up under the influence of Greek philosophy. Justin Martyr, for instance, expressly speaks of the divine influence resting on the prophets as the plectrum on the lyre. But this conception of ecstatic prophecy became discredited in the Christian Church in the second century, by the enthusiastic sect of Monotheists, who claimed to be endued with a new gift of divine inspiration, and whose prophets exhibited similar convulsive and ecstatic symptoms to those which have marked recent manifestations among ourselves. The result was that S. Paul's statement that in true prophecy, 'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,' came to be recognised as a test of genuine divine influence, and Origen, who rendered such incalculable services to the cause of Scripture and divine interpretation, notwithstanding some extravagances, enunciated a very remarkable doctrine on this subject, namely, that inspiration involves an enhanced activity of the human spirit effected by the action of the Divine Spirit upon it; the Spirit of God, that is to say, when it breathes into a soul, does not act as an anæsthetic; it calls into action the full powers of the heart and the mind, and the fullest human powers.

II. Any extreme theory of inspiration would appear to be refuted by one single consideration, which has also an important bearing upon other controversies connected with the subject. I mean the undoubted variations of a very marked character between the text of the Septuagint and that of the extra Hebrew manuscripts. One illustration will be sufficient for our purpose. In the narrative of David's early life, and in particular his conflict with Goliath, there appears in our English Bibles what seems a singular inconsistency. At the end of one chapter David is represented as in a favoured position at the court of Saul, and Saul is described as being attached to him; but when, in the next chapter, he encounters Goliath, Saul

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is represented as having no knowledge of him, and inquiring whose son this stripling is. It is a remarkable fact that the verses constituting a considerable portion of the chapter about Goliath, from which the difficulty arises, do not exist in one of the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint version at all; but that manuscript would seem to be a clear witness to the Hebrew manuscripts which were current at the same time or before it, that is to say, in the fourth century of our era; and it is to be borne in mind that no Hebrew manuscript in existence is of an earlier date than the eighth century of our own era. On ordinary principles of criticism this Septuagint manuscript may be assumed to be equal to the other.

Two conclusions of consequence to the argument seem to follow from such a fact. One is that it can be of little practical purpose to dispute as to the literal inspiration of the text of the Scriptures, when it is indisputable as a matter of fact that we do not possess adequate evidence of that original state of the text. There is abundant ground for assurance that we possess the substance of the text in sufficient correctness for all purposes of practice, but it can be of no use to speak of literal inspiration if you have not got the letter, and that is what appears clearly disproved in such a conflict of texts.

The other conclusion, and more important and practical one, would seem to be that it is no part of Divine Providence to ensure minute accuracy in every detail of the sacred records. That accuracy, as a matter of fact, so far as secondary details are concerned, has clearly not been preserved. If we take the New Testament we find the same phenomenon in a most conspicuous manner, as affecting the most solemn and most important records of that book; I mean, the record of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Even in this momentous matter, around which such intense controversy has raged in the Christian Church, there remain variations in detail. But what does this point to but the fact that the presence, the supremacy of the Divine Spirit, is compatible, as common sense would have suggested to us, with variations and imperfections in detail? To use an illustration from Hooker, which I will presently quote for another purpose, a man's nature may be complete for all essential purposes though his body may be marred by some imperfections. That which we are assured of is, that in all points essential to the practical and substantial truth of their communications, the writers of the Scriptures were preserved by the divine superintendence from error, and that the Spirit of God so quickened and inspired all their faculties as to enable them to feel more truly, to see more clearly, and to speak more forcibly, than would have been possible by human action alone. To that statement of the doctrine no modern discoveries of any kind

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are in opposition, while on the contrary, a succession of discoveries during the past fifty years, and excavations in every country to which the Bible narratives refer, have confirmed their truth in a most marvellous manner. Only last year a German scholar, in his commentary on Genesis, quoted with approbation a statement of Sir Henry Rawlinson, that the genealogy of the nations in Genesis has, by advancing investigation, received such brilliant confirmation that it may be with full justice said that it is the most authentic record we possess of the relation of the filiation of the creations of the earth. Those variations for the text, of which I have given an instance, ought to be sufficient to show how precarious are any objections to the general trustworthiness of a book like the Old Testament drawn from detail. But in the substantial accuracy of historic truth, both the Old and New Testament have stood the severe ordeal of all this century with amazing stability. They stand it still. And if so we have only to recur to that reasonable theory of inspiration which, as we have seen, was held in the best days of the Christian Church, and was in harmony with the best Jewish thought, and we may confidently rely, with those reasonable qualifications to be attached to all human language, upon S. Paul's assurance that all Scripture is inspired by God, for, as Hooker says, 'All those writings which contain in them the law of God, all those venerable books of Scripture, all those sacred tomes and volumes of Holy Writ, they are with such perfection framed that in them there is nothing lacking the lack of which would deprive us of life ;' and, again, 'There is in Scripture, therefore, no defect but that any man, what place or calling soever he holdeth in the Church of God, may have thereby the light of his natural understanding so perfected that, the one being relieved by the other, he can want no part of needful instruction or any good work which God Himself requireth, whether it be natural or supernatural.'

H. WACE.

Liberty of the Christian Life.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. S. JOHN viii. 36.

I WANT to try to point you to the power of Christ, by which He liberates the human soul and sends it forth into this larger destiny. I am glad to speak of Christ my Master thus, because so often in Christendom it has seemed as if Christ were the enslaver of mankind, as if He went among men as He went through the Temple, with a lash, rebuking men simply for their iniquities ; as if He were continually uttering the great 'Thou shalt not' of prohibition,

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telling men what they must not do, and rebuking them for their wrong acts. This is but the subordinate message of Him who comes to us with the Gospel of Christianity. His great message is that of freedom and of a larger life; and every breaking away of any one from slavery, as I hope we shall see, is but the preliminary to the opening of some larger chamber of the human life. What shall we say, then, when we speak of Christ as the liberator of mankind—Christ the great giver of liberty?

I. We say, in the first place, that it is absolutely impossible that any man shall give to another man that which he does not himself possess; that it is impossible that any man shall open the prison door from the inside, unless he have the key in his own hand. But one comes from the outside, from the region of liberty, and opens the prison doors to those who are shut up within. Therefore, when we think of the liberty which Christ gives, and of the larger life which Christ opens to us, we think, first of all, of the liberty which belongs to Him.

II. There comes another part of the richness of His life. He is absolutely free from the thralldom of sin because life is so rich and interesting to Him. I think—and you will perhaps agree with me—that some of you could furnish me with illustrations out of your own experience that, perhaps, I will not be able to furnish you out of mine. I think that one of the reasons why men hold to sin, why men go on in habits which they themselves despise, is that they are somehow afraid that there does not lie outside of that region of life anything that would interest them in vitality. They think of the old phrase that has been tossed to and fro upon the lips of men in all these years, when the young man has called it seeing life, when he has gone into the depths of iniquity, when he has waded through the mire and slime of every profligate and degraded habit. There is just exactly the key to what I mean. A young man calls that thing seeing life. What did Jesus Christ call seeing life? He lifted up His eyes, and looked abroad, and life was full of the Spirit of His Father, and intensely interesting to Him, absorbing in every direction. There never came a fear to Him lest, if He were not profligate, abandoning His life to luxury, and idleness and sin, the world would pall upon Him, and there would be nothing left for Him to do, nothing left for those hands that were for ever being claimed by human need; nothing left for those feet that were for ever being summoned to errands which they could not refuse, in order to accomplish which they must leave everything else behind; nothing left for those eyes to see, when there was the deeper truth of God's love and the deeper depth of human nature for them to be looking into every moment. Ah! my friends, if there is any delusion in a man's soul that Jesus

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Christ dispels, is it not that, that life has no interest apart from profligacy, frivolity, and sin? He who knows the true interest of life enters into the freedom of Christ, and leaves the stains behind him slipping from his garments, and goes forth into the full light of the freedom of God.

III. Then, I think another of the great freedoms of Jesus was His freedom from those things which are perpetually holding us down because they are so subtle and deep—the freedom from the ordinary traditions of society. Jesus stepped right across the traditions of Jerusalem. And yet, is it not wonderful, have you ever thought how there is in Jesus not the least signs of defiance? He is not one of your light-blooded people who think that virtue consists in defying the conventionalities by which a man is surrounded. That is purely negative. There was the absolutely positive in Jesus Christ; and because He was absorbed in those truths which lie at the very bottom of all things, He could afford to be regardless of the traditions which had come down and which constituted so much of the life of the men that were around Him. Jesus was the great radical. Why? Because He was truly conservative. Conservatism and radicalism, far as they seem to be from one another upon the surface of our life, come together and meet, and are one at the bottom of our life. No man can be a true conservative who has not hold upon the fundamental principles and the eternal truths of the universe; and no man can be a real radical who is not preserving those truths, and insisting that in them lies the perplexity of human happiness and human goodness.

Another wonderful thing about Christ is that in His day He was the disturber of things; but what is He to-day? The revolutionary man seems to see Christ having no share in his disturbances; and the conservative man, as we call him—the man who desires the perpetuity of society, who is apt to call himself a Christian—simply gives all the solid conservatism that is in his life to the Church of Jesus Christ, which was once the most radical and disturbing element in our human society. What is it to-day but very often the home into which old abuses creep, and where men keep themselves quiet and dumb and blind from seeing the flagrant enormities and the prevalent needs of the time? There is the difference between the Church of to-day and the Church of Christ in His day, who carried the Church within His own divine and human bosom; who could defy the traditions by which He was surrounded, simply because He had His peculiar abiding-place within the truths of which those traditions pretended to be the embodiments, and of which they were very often the corruptions and the misrepresentations.

Jesus Christ is positive and not negative. Liberty, and not

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slavery, you see entirely in His escape. I love to think of that calm figure, walking majestically because it is so absolutely calm, through the perplexed and troubled and feverish streets, as if He stood to-day and rebuked you, why? Not for doing the things which you are doing; not for being occupied with the details of life which have been thrust into your hands, and which you have constantly to do with; but for being the slaves where you ought to be the masters; for being ruled by the things which you ought to have under your control. Here He stands the poor Christ, the calm Christ, the simple Christ, in the midst of our riches, and our agitation and our complexity and our artificialness and our slowness of life. Here He stands; and you come to worship Him. What must it mean? What must it mean that you rich men have come and bowed down here before the poor Jesus Christ? What must it mean that you have come out of your gorgeous houses, and have come to kneel and bow down before Him who had not where to lay His head? Does it mean that your gorgeous houses and your rich luxury is wrong? No, no! But it does mean that you have found in Him something that is greater; and unless you go away clear in the sense that He, and that which He represents, is greater, you have lost the lesson of His teaching, you have lost the presence of His life.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Circumspection. It does not suffice to do good: we must do it with circumspection, after we have considered how, when, where, EPHESIANS v. 15. and why we should thus act.

Time. No man can be provident of his time who is not prudent EPHESIANS v. 15. in the choice of his company.
Time is the parent of truth.

Time gained by method. MAKE the most of time, it flies away so fast: yet method will teach you to win time.

Loss of Time. THE greatest loss of time is delay and expectation, which S. MATTHEW xxi. 28. depends upon the future. We let go the present, which we have in our power, and look forward to that which depends upon chance, and so quit a certainty for an uncertainty.

It is better to lose anything than to lose time; we can recover lost money, but time is irrecoverable.

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Use of Time. TIME is like a ship which never anchors. While I am abroad I had better do those things which may advantage me at my landing, than practise such as shall cause my convictment when I come to the shore.

Waste of Time. THOSE that lose a day are dangerously prodigal; those that dare misspend it, desperate.

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	. . . . .	EPHESIANS VI. 10-20.
GOSPEL,	. . . . .	S. JOHN IV. 46-54.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	. . . . .	DANIEL III.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	. . . . .	DANIEL IV. OR V.
SECOND LESSONS,	. . . . .	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Worship of the Golden Image.

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. DANIEL iii. 25.



SUPPOSE that if any one had to select the brightest and the happiest scene of all history, sacred or profane, it would be the Transfiguration on the mountain of Tabor.

I suppose that if any one had to select the darkest and saddest passage, he could not find a darker or a sadder than the three young men cast, bound, into the midst of that 'burning fiery furnace,' heated sevenfold.

But now observe the effects.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, there were also three men, S. Peter, S. James, and S. John. They 'saw the excellent glory'; they listened to the thrilling discourse of Jesus and His saints; they heard, what S. Peter, finding all words too weak, describes as 'such a voice from heaven.'

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And how were those three men affected? Were they deeply interested, and very vigilant? They were 'heavy with sleep'! Were they full of joy? They were 'sore afraid'! Was their intellect illumined? They 'wist not what was said'! Did they speak wisely? Their words were utterly foolish!

Now look at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire. The flames, which were to consume them, have only burnt their fetters, and they are quite free. They walk the furnace in perfect liberty. Not a hair is singed, nor the sheen of their coats changed, nor the smell of fire has passed upon them. An angel—we have Nebuchadnezzar's authority for saying it—an angel waited on them; the Son of God Himself was there, real, manifest, distinct.

It is clear that that dungeon of fire was a little sanctuary. All holy things were there. No sleep, no fear, no foolish words. It is all perfect peace. And it would be the brightest spot of memory, in all the retrospect of life, to those three youths. And, what was best of all, they glorified God. The king himself, for their sake, blessed their God; and the decree went forth that the people of every nation and language should honour the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Which was the best? Which was the happiest? The mount of Transfiguration, tipped with effulgent glory, or Nebuchadnezzar's 'burning fiery furnace'?

Life is full of such strange contrasts, and such speaking paradoxes. Its deserts have been sweeter than its gardens; its solitudes than its best companies. The poor have been the rich ones, and the weakest have been the giants. 'The lame have taken the prey,' and the slow have outstripped the fast. The first have been last, and the last have been first. There hath been more joy in some tears than in all the laughter. And dying moments have had more real life than all living days.

For so, God crosses man's hands, and reverses the blessings, to confound us, that He may stand out alone in His sovereignty and grace.

There are many gay things which are going on in this place. Wealth spreads its pageant; and the beauteous and the glittering glance up and down to gain men's smile; and kind, flattering words pass pleasantly. And there is amusement everywhere. And all the day, and half the night, you change your excitement, and many an undercurrent of loving hope flows cheerily in throbbing hearts, and you walk amid the flowers, and all life's surface is passing merrily.

And not far behind, a very little way out of sight, in this same place, there are sick-chambers, rooms with their shaded light, and pallid faces which look at one another dreamily, and tell of more

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than they like to speak. And empty seats, which can never be filled again.

But in that throng of mirth, and that world of fashion, one, who has learnt to read it right, sees there is a want. Those hearts are not satisfied. They have no resting-place. They are trying to get, where they never find it, something which they never define. Their souls are too large for the life they are leading; and they stretch on to limits beyond them.

And they have cares and thoughts, which they know not where to cast, and memories, which press heavily for lack of refuge and sympathy.

While in those saddened scenes of pain and sorrow, there is a presence which dispels the shadows. There may be no mirth, but there is peace, 'perfect peace,' and a quiet mind, and a holy radiance, and the best and the purest converse of the soul, and communion more real than the society of this world ever gave. And heaven is near. And sin has no bonds, and fear no fetters. But their hearts will soar away from the trammels of the body; and the pain seems scarcely to touch them, nor the grave to reach them. For it is Jesus and His rest!

And say again, which is best, the fashion, or the affliction? the gaudy colours, or the sombre hues? the noisy surface, or the still, deep places? the world, or Christ?

It was not only on 'the plain of Dura' that there has been set up 'an image of gold' for worship.

At this moment, if I am informed rightly, the greed of money is everywhere. Never so great. It is the idol of business, and thousands and thousands worship its possessors.

And the world—the world, how it shows the universality of foolish pleasures and empty occupations! The world—'the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—bodily gratification, dress, and equipage, and all pretty things; and the costliness of entertainments, and the grandeur of living, and the ostentation of pride, rank, and dignity—'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—the world, the world is in every place. No grade of society, no circle of life, no age, no spot, but it has its world!

The very Church has its world—increasingly the world—all worldly adjuncts to make up its worship. No separation from the world's frivolity. The Church and the world are, now-a-days, in a strange accord. And every one likes to have it so.

And the crowd that gather round 'the golden image,' and prostrate themselves before it, and the sympathy of numbers, tells from man to man; and the fascination, and the crowd, and the music, and the heated imagination, and the strong enthusiasm lends its charm. And

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there are very few who can help but bow where all consent to call it true.

Meanwhile, as in Dura, so in every place, there are those whose answer to the Protean world, in all its shapes, is, 'We will not serve thy god, nor worship the image thou hast set up.'

A small number—a little remnant of firm, strong, loyal hearts—which own one Master, and cleave to one truth. They have given their hearts to Christ, and they allow no rival. In Him they have found all they need; and they cannot leave Him.

And strong faith has been given them, and they are not afraid, even at the furnace-gate. They care not, though they stand alone. And they are well content, for the love they have received and the love they feel, to brave all consequences, even to the death!

And what consequences? Now understand this. So long as you go on—in a worldly, unconverted way, flowing with the stream—you may have no special trials. But as soon as ever you begin to confess Christ, and take a bold and independent stand on God's side, three things will follow it. The world will turn against you; Satan's jealousy will be stirred to get rid—if he can—of you, and the Christ in you, and the influence of Christ in you, either by your apostasy, or by some deep fall, or by your destruction; and God Himself—careful for your young growth, using either the world, or Satan, for this purpose—will discipline you, and prove you, and afflict you, to do you good—to draw out and increase the grace that is in you.

Hence, the almost universal law that, where real religion begins, trouble begins. It is the children of God who go into 'the furnace'; and the greater the saint that is to be, the hotter the fire! Observe the distinction, 'The fining-pot for silver; the furnace for gold.'

And do not wonder if you find it heated for you seven-fold; for, from the moment of your conversion, you have to do with a great God; a great God in everything: very great in His comforting, very great in His chastening.

Do you ask, Of what the fire will be composed? Shame, scorn, misrepresentation, worldly losses, pain, sickness, loneliness, bereavement! But much more than this. Remorse, inward conflicts, spiritual shafts of Satan, terrors of mind, horrid shapes of unbelief! These make the fire. Flames within you, flames without you, raging upon an imprisoned soul!

You may never have felt it; perhaps you never will. For the experiences of God's children are infinitely various. But have we not cause to ask ourselves, if we have not the trials, have we been as faithful as we ought, to Christ? Would not more faithfulness have brought more persecution?

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But there are those who can tell of a furnace which they have felt, as fierce as Nebuchadnezzar's hottest fires, and fiercer too. And the higher the saint, the keener has been the furnace.

But let those who have been in that furnace write its history: 'We went in bound; but we found a liberty, such as we never conceived or felt before. There was such sympathy with Jesus. He walked with us, and we with Him, through the fire. Chains of the flesh were burnt away in flames which had their mission for that very end; and, when they had done it, could do no more. The fastenings of this world were loosened; and the more our bodies were confined, the more our spirits mounted. And the light of the Christ that was there, outshone far the tormenting elements, and we heeded them not; for we saw more of Him, and felt Him near. There was more nearness there than ever in the world's bright sunshine. And it was so beautiful there, so tender, so strong! All the Man, and all the God. And He was praised in the sweet calm He gave. Men saw, and marvelled at His grace. And when we came forth, so happy and unscathed, we carried an experience, which enabled us for all future conflicts, and raised us, at that moment, far above life's little things. And all "took knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus." And many more in every age, knowing our deliverance and our peace, were the more brave to serve and suffer for His dear Name.'

That is the furnace which Christ's presence softens. Have you Christ's presence? Without Christ, is not heaven hell? With Christ, is not hell heaven?

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Battle of Life.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. EPHESIANS VI. 12.



THE battle of life' is a metaphor which almost all men at some time in their lives realise and own as true. It suggests a picture which recalls to almost every man his own history, if it has been at all an earnest life. We may think that it has not been so with other men; we may look at some bright and smiling life, and say with something of envy, with something also almost like reproach in our tone, 'Lo, life has no battle for him! Behold how

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smooth and easy all the world has been for him!’ The man himself knows better. And we, if we come close to him, can see the scars, nay, we can hear the battle of his life still going on. But whether we come close enough to him to know the real truth of his life or not, we know the truth about our own. Life is a battle. For ever on the watch against our enemies, for ever guarding our own lives, for ever watching our chance for an attack upon the foe—so we all live if we are earnest men.

But metaphors are delusive, and if we cling too long and closely to them they grow tiresome. They are very apt often to blind us to the need of careful definition and discrimination. This metaphor, for instance—life a battle—may seem so satisfactory that it may lead us to forget that there are all kinds of battles, that we do not know much about a battle until we understand who the enemy is and what the weapons are. Two tribes of savages hewing away at each other in the jungle, the host of crusaders contending with the soldiers of the prophets on the great plain of Galilee, the Swiss peasants fighting for freedom in their mountain fastnesses, our soldiers struggling with rebellion—all these are battles; but how different they are! Evidently, before the old metaphor, ‘the battle of life,’ can mean anything very definite or practical to us, we must open it with the sharp knife of a question. We must ask who is the enemy with whom the battle of life is being fought.

The answers which will come are very various, and more than one answer will be true.

There can be little doubt of what S. Paul meant when he first used the word. His thought is perfectly distinct and clear. He cries to his Ephesians, ‘You are fighting with principalities and powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly regions, in the sky or air.’ They are lofty words, and they are very definite. He is thinking of evil spirits. He believes distinctly in a universe all full of unseen forces. To him goodness, morality, was the first condition of all life. Here on this earth or anywhere beyond the stars, to be good must be the first condition of all strength. He who was good, he who was trying to be good, entered thereby into friendly confederation with all the noble forces of the universe, and bid defiance to all the evil powers of the sky and air. For him all good beings fought; against his simple righteousness all evil beings would beat themselves in vain, and ultimately must go down and fail, here or beyond the stars. That is a noble faith. In the simplicity and grandeur of a faith like that, man will some day come once more to the now almost lost belief in the connection of his life with unseen spiritual powers.

It is good, no doubt, that two strifes, the outer and the inner, the

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strife with self and the strife with the world's sin, should go on together. The man who knew no enemy within himself, who was so absorbed in fighting with the world's sin that he grew unconscious of his own inner life, by and by would become arrogant and superficial. Such men the world has often seen among its philanthropists. The man who is totally wrapped up in the war within him, the war with himself for his own life, grows selfish and grows morbid. The two must go on together. Each keeps the other healthy and true. Fight with your own sin, and let that fight keep you humble and full of sympathy when you go out into the world and strike at the sin of which the world is full. Fight with the world's sin, and let the needs of that fight make you aware of how much is wrong, and make you eager that everything shall be right within yourself. Here is the balance and mutual ministry of self-care and world-care which makes the truest man the healthiest philanthropist.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The Bonds of S. Paul.

For which I am an ambassador in bonds. EPHESIANS VI. 20.

I. **A**N ambassador in bonds! Of all the paradoxes is not this the strangest? How different are the first suggestions of that high title. What pomp and pageantry, what visible pride of conscious authority, what obeisance of courteous reception, what glad welcome or reverential awe! But hardly a prison and a chain.

What an envoy was this! Paul the veteran, 'an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.' Of what a kingdom! none less than τὰ ἐπουράνια, 'the heavenlies.' With what a commission! The dispensation of the mystery that had been hid from all ages and generations. And all the stranger is it, if we press home the word ambassador, as standing here by no mere figure, but in fact; not for the mere interpreter of a theory, but as the personal messenger of a personal prince; the delegate of the Kingdom of Heaven linked by a chain to Cæsar's guardman.

Is the paradox hereby heightened? or is it just in this thought of his Master that the enigma of the humiliation is partly resolved? The enigma not only of a Paul in bonds, but of all that inherit him; of the Church herself, for to her let us now pass, not the abstract or ideal, which is the kingdom, but the concrete and visible, all the congregation of faithful men east and west, which is the ambassador. Has not this been her solace, as she seemed to stand perennially in bonds; in bonds often of oppression and long travail, in bonds always

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of very human limitations? King though her Master be, yet He left a work to be wrought out on no new transcendental lines, but on those principles and by those applications of eternal verities to human conditions in which He had Himself stooped to lead the way. 'My kingdom is not of this world'; shall then its ambassadors look to be ever really free amid their temporal and terrestrial surroundings? 'Made perfect through suffering'; and shall not the servant be as his Lord? 'When I am weak, then am I strong'; thus the great Apostle fulfilled the same law to which his Master had submitted, and shall the Church he moulded be exempt? If that strength is to be no illusion, shall not the weakness also be often very real?

This thought will go a long way: for an ideally consistent Church on earth it might cover the whole ground of our paradox. But it is to a very earthly vessel that the charge has been consigned, and we shall have sometimes to take account of other bonds in our catalogue, not only the bonds of flesh and blood, but the load of human frailties and passions, the infection of alien fallacies and fashions, and sometimes, too, the trammels of a perilous prosperity counterfeiting freedom, or the weight of her own exuberant ascendancy.

II. 'Our Jerusalem that now is' is certainly not yet free. The heavenly force is conditioned by an earthly environment. But it may well be that fetters rather than freedom are after all the very means appointed for her gradual progress and development.

There are epochs of the Church in which history displays only spiritual stagnation on the surface, while a strange inversion brings the least Christ-like or Paul-like figures to the top, though a nameless thread of vigorous life somewhere beneath must have been hid with God. There were generations in which the 'religion of her ostensible leaders was based not so much on the foundation of Christ as on the philosophy of Aristotle.' And one man asks whether the profligacy of tenth century popes, or the rack and stake and their moral substitutes are to be classed as examples of the corruption of the Church when free from wholesome constraint and spoiled by worldly success, or of the subjection of the more genuine core of the Church to the chastening discipline of an Egyptian servitude? Or another will ask whether royal supremacy and state support are really guarantees not lightly to be sacrificed of her dignity and stability, or are, as some would plead, but trusses and guiding-irons of a growing tree or branch, helpful fetters for a few centuries, yet fetters still? Such vexed questions we cannot now discuss, but only repeat what few would dispute, that oftentimes she has been really weakest when she seemed most strong, strongest when most weak.

III. In your character of witnesses and ambassadors of the kingdom you may still have to learn something of the fetters and checks in

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which you must needs work and move, some to be accepted as inevitable, some to be chosen as salutary. There are, I suppose, at the outset, the common inheritance, the Baconian idola of the tribe, the cave, the mart, the theatre; those prejudices inherent in the race, in the individual, in custom, in system. The meshes of these a strong man may himself burst through, and yet find they must be reckoned with in the hostility or the *vis inertiae* of the world around him, in things spiritual as well as things scientific. There are the checks on free-will to be struggled with, the spells of heredity, and of a man's special place in the social growth of centuries, which the ordinary worker finds as hard to evade as his own shadow. And there are perhaps its own bonds lying on each generation, which though half recognised and half worn through, must wait a while for their destined genius to rive them quite asunder. There have been many epochs of religious movements as well as secular in which men a little in advance of their age have been hampered with fetters unknown to their sons or grandsons; and though all conventions are not fetters, nor all novelties the truth, yet all reformers and most discoverers have been heavily weighted by the dulness or rancour of their time.

But besides necessary bonds, how many constraints and trammels must be voluntarily welcomed by the rank and file if good work is to be done in a crowded world? 'His soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' will now more rarely than ever fit the busy worker.

Shackles inevitable of time, and space, and mortal flesh; iron chains laid upon us by fortune or foemen; golden manacles of conscience and a royal command; these the ambassador shall proudly wear, and yet find the service of his King is perfect freedom. Bonds of allegiance, of brotherhood, of peace, may these too all be yours. But far from you all in the coming years of your good work, be the crippling memory of ill-spent days; far from you be the paralysing weight of some wilful sin, once looked at in the face, too late.


J. ROBERTSON.

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III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Reward of Weak Faith.

The nobleman said unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. S. JOHN iv. 48, 49.

I.  HE lesson we learn from this miracle appears to be that Jesus rewards much lower degrees of faith than we should perhaps have expected. Here was one who had come twenty miles to ask for the restoration of his child. This showed considerable faith to make him take such a journey. And he seemed to believe that Jesus could heal only when He was present. Now this is in very strong contrast with the faith of the centurion in S. Matt. viii., the Gospel for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, where the centurion says to Jesus, 'I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.' This was treating our Lord far more as if He were God, and had all power everywhere in every place at His disposal.

II. It is somewhat difficult to explain in what sense we are to take the words of Christ, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' The man certainly believed that our Lord could, and yet, apparently, only when He was present. What signs did he require? Chrysostom supposes that he had but half a belief, that he came to our Lord in a sort of tentative way; and that it was only when, from the account of his servant as to the time that the fever left the child with the time that the Lord uttered the words, 'Thy son liveth,' that he truly believed to the salvation of his soul. This coincidence of his son's restoration with the Lord's words was the sign and wonder which his weak faith required. Considering the weakness of the faith in this age, even of the most faithful, we should take great encouragement from this account. It assures us that the Lord pities and helps the weakness of our faith.

M. F. SADLER.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Religion and Knowledge.

Men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. DANIEL iii. 4
When He cometh, will He find faith on the earth? S. LUKE xviii. 8.



HERE is a very strange connection between these two passages of Scripture, spoken half a thousand years apart from one another. When the prophet saw the vision of the last days, the thing which made its impression upon his imagination was the wonderful quickening of intellectual activity. Men shall run to and fro, and there shall be a mighty increase in human knowledge. When the Saviour looked upon the same picture, it raised a question, apparently, in His mind as to whether the faith which He had come into the world to establish would be able to survive such increase of human knowledge. There is certainly not only a relation between these two passages, but there is also a relation between the two things themselves, between the increase of human knowledge and the persistence of the Christian faith.

It has been thought sometimes that the one is incompatible with the other. Or, at any rate, that the very worst possible condition for the subsistence of the faith of Christ is, or would be, a time when human knowledge would be greatly multiplied, when men would run to and fro characterised by that restlessness which always marks intellectual progress.

I. I beg to think for a moment how closely all our habits of Christian believing are bound up with the things which we learn from physical science, which belong to the sum-total of the world's knowledge.

When Copernicus enunciated his theory of the solar system, he did very much more than write books on astronomy. He changed the Christian religion as well. If you will think for a moment, you will see how. Suppose, as the world did suppose until a few centuries ago, that this earth was the very centre of all things, that the sun, an orb'd blaze, was a yard across its face, moving around it from day to day, and the moon, another attendant around it, with the diameter of half a dozen inches; that upon this earth, the one thing which stood pre-eminent for dignity and magnificence was man; and

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then you can easily understand how men believed that they were in very close and immediate relationship with God. For what was there between them? There was God, that sat there in the remote space. There were the angels, that had communication between God and man. And then men, who inhabited this earth, the most dignified, the greatest of all things, next to God Himself.

But now comes a new science which says to the human race, You are mistaken about the position you hold in the universe. Instead of your having your habitation upon the central orb about which all the rest wheel, you are simply little specks walking upon an insignificant fragment, in one of the farthest off and most remote corners of space; you must abdicate the honoured position which you had in the universe. As the world, the material world, was belittled, the human race was belittled with it. And so it was a natural step, although maybe a long step, from that position which man claimed for himself as being little higher than the apes. The step is a long one, but it is by no means an unnatural one. It is the necessary consequence of the dethronement of our race from the place which it supposed itself to hold in the universe.

Such a record as that contained in the holy Scripture lays more stress upon our faith than it did upon the faith of our forefathers. It does. The resurrection of the body, for example, was one thing before the laws of chemical metamorphosis were discovered, and is quite another thing now.

II. What shall we say to all this? Here stand the two terms of the problem. Knowledge has increased; faith, in a certain aspect, has decreased. What lies in the future? Is knowledge going on increasing, and is faith going on decreasing? or is it possible that we have misread the signs of the present time? I answer unquestionably, that the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is, by the very terms of its enunciation, bound to grow, and to grow continuously. If it could be shown at any moment, that, taking the whole world together, the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is steadily decreasing, it would justify very much more than apprehension for the future of the faith. It would argue something radically wrong with the faith itself. The Christian man dare not admit at any moment that the faith of his Lord Jesus Christ has ceased to move men's minds. It must continue to grow, or it must be seen to be stricken with the first symptoms of its inevitable death.

The story is told of a French philanthropist, that once he invented a new religion. It was a sort of modified and improved Christianity. He fitted for it a ritual and a series of doctrines which he embodied into a creed; but, to his astonishment, his propaganda met with no success. Men listened to what he had

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to say, turned away and laughed, and went on with their frivolities. So he came one day to the ex-bishop Talleyrand, complaining that his new religion could get no hearing; that men were so wedded to their old faiths, their old worship, that they would not listen. The keen old man sympathised with him, and said to him, 'It is true; it is very hard for a new religion to get a hearing. I am at a loss to advise you what to do.' And then, seeming to bethink himself, he said, 'There is one thing which you might try. I would suggest it to you. Get yourself crucified, and rise again the third day!'

We turn our minds to the parable of Lessing. 'Once upon a time a certain king of a great realm built himself a palace, the most gorgeous that ever had been planned, the wonder of the whole earth. A strife arose among certain connoisseurs as to some of the obscure ground-plans upon which the palace was constructed. The conflict lasted through a great many years. While this conflict was going on, it happened upon a time, that a watchman one night cried out, "Fire!" And the architects began running hither and thither, each with his plan, squabbling as to whether the fire had broken out in this place, or whether it had broken out at that place, and as to what was the best spot to apply the engines. And its friends all took to wrangling. Alas, alas! the beautiful palace will be burned. But it stood there; and presently they discovered that it was not on fire at all. Behind it there was an extraordinary display of northern lights, which shone through it with such brilliancy that the palace itself seemed to be full of flame.'

So we say, let knowledge increase, let it run to and fro, let it lighten up the world all it will, it will only illuminate, because it cannot destroy, the city of our God. S. D. McCONNELL.

The Divine Presence in the Fire.

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. DANIEL iii. 25.

I. **W**E do not ask for great insight to perceive that this story is a picture of the world: man and the fire, that is life. But it does ask some insight, or, at least, if not some insight, some reflection, to perceive the other aspect of its universality. If man and the fire shall be described as life, man and the fire and the Divine Presence walking with man in the fire—that is religion. It is something that we are given the power of perceiving a greater than man with man in the fire. I ask you to look at man in the fire. I take man first as an intellectual being. Pain, which comes to the sons of men, comes with an appeal to their consciousness. The beast

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suffers, but he makes no moan beyond the moment of suffering; but man can anticipate, and he knows that the pain which enters into his life to-day is the indication of something which is working there, and he lives in the constant dread of its recurrence. Ah! from these two things, from memory and anticipation, there comes the agony of retrospect and the agony of suspense.

Take man as a moral being. Here, again, look at the story. These men suffered because of their allegiance to a law higher than the law of self-preservation. 'Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God,' was the language of Apostles. Duty commands us (so men in all ages have spoken); we must do right, though it mean death, because there is a law within which is imperious, paramount, predominating over the law of self-preservation. Why is it that a man who is conscientious must suffer? It is just because he is conscientious. He cannot demoralise himself, and the law within asserts itself and makes him face the greater pain. But this proclaims his greatness. He is the greater, because he is the witness to a law which is larger, truer, deeper than any of the outside laws which touch the physical world.

In another way his sense of right makes him suffer. He cannot perhaps acquiesce in conventional standards: but he must do right though the world frown, because the divine law within him is asserting itself over the law outside. His suffering springs from this—his capacity to understand the allegiance which he owes to the higher law. Here, again, in the very agony which comes to the soul where conscience rules, I see something which resembles the form of the Son of God.

Take man as a spiritual being. Here, again, you find the same law. He cannot yield to man, he realises that his progress must be through pain. He cannot advance except through pain. What is he doing? Bearing witness to the divine law which is within him—to that presence of the Son of God, which is seen most where the fire is fiercest.

II. In every universal thing there is some law. The men at whose side the Son of God walks, who are triumphant over the fierceness of the flame are the men who have had a victory previous to that. Their victory over the fire was preceded by their victory over the multitude. They would not bow down, and, being victorious in their refusal to bow down before the sleek conventionalisms of life, they are the victors when the supreme agony comes. But we must go back further. Who are the men who have been strong against the world, able to stand when the multitude fall? The men who have first been victors over themselves. These men who were victorious over the world, and would not bow before the image of

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gold, were the men who, in the earlier part of their career, had mastered themselves. To those about them they had said, 'The luxuries of this place, its attractions and its seductions, we feel to be dangerous to the law of our manhood, and the law of the divine life within us; give us, therefore, plain fare; feed us not with the king's dainties.' What is this? It is the triumph over self. The man who has been victorious over self is the man who is victorious over the world, and the man who is victorious over the world is victorious over the fire which is in the world. That is the law.

III. We are called upon to suffer in the world, and who will unriddle its pain? The pain is given that the divine may be made manifest. The world upon which the Cross was raised was created the world of suffering. The Cross was to be the symbol of its agony, and the symbol of the Divine Presence also. It is in the fire and in the pain that the Divine Presence is revealed. In this lies the glory of suffering. As we suffer, the presence of God may be seen. We feel that the powers within us are not equal to the conflict of life, not strong enough to battle against the passions within us, not courageous enough to face the temptations of the world, not trained enough to bear the fire, the fierce fire, of life's supremest agony; yet we can only look up with appealing eyes, and with prayerful and trustful hearts, to that Divine Presence whose love is imperishable. But we can do more. We, even we, can manifest Him and His power. If we stand in the evil day, 'and, having done all, still stand,' we shall be able to come forth from the fire unhurt, without having even the smell of fire upon us.

It is well then to recognise, as our Master did, the material laws around us, and to urge upon all reverence for the physical laws by which life is regulated. But we must go higher and say, 'The law by which victory in life is to be achieved is the law of self-control.' And yet higher still we may go, and find the inspiration of our life in the revelation of the Divine Presence, of 'God with us.' Oh, here lies the charm, and here the courage for the soul of man. Tell me that I have to struggle, that I have to win the victory for myself, and I shall be appalled; the thought of my many passions will petrify my efforts and turn my powers into stone; but, when you say God is with me, a sword is put into my trembling hand and the blow dealt is in the name of God. He has nerved my hand, He has covered my head in the day of battle. Is not this love with us still? Do we preach the gospel of an absent God? Here is the law of self-conquest; but here is also the inspiring thought, that you are never left alone, that in its fiercest fires the Divine Presence moves with you. There is courage, there is hope, there is guarantee of victory.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

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The Handwriting on the Wall.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. DANIEL v. 5.

I. **T**HERE are many Belshazzars in the world; even at the present moment. There is, in human nature, an evil rebelling principle against the God who made us; and men are to be found whose wills are in violent opposition to His laws and authority. They have a law in their members, which they are determined to follow; they have idols of their own hearts, idols of gold, silver, iron, wood, and stone, whom they resolve to serve, let the consequences be what they may. Their days are numbered, their career fixed, their punishment entered, in the great book of life and death. The moment of their dissolution is hid from them; but whenever it does come, in their present state, it must lead to a place of torment and anguish unutterable.

II. Men do not sufficiently consider the omniscience of God. They would persuade themselves that there are places where He cannot see them; that there are things which He does not know. To judge by their conduct, they seem to ask, in the words of Job, 'How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.' But, after all, it is weak and wicked man that is deceived, and not God. Among the most perilous delusions of sin, must it be considered by the Christian, that his very heart can be so seared against the convictions of truth, that he can for a moment bring himself, like some of the heathen, to imagine the all-seeing, the ever-present, and all-pervading Godhead, stripped of His very nature, and slumbering, absent, or unobservant in the recesses of wickedness.

III. The third consideration arising from the text is this: How would it be with each of us, if there were a handwriting against the wall to warn us of the end of our career, and the arrival of our day of account; if, in the commission of guilt, in the midst of our unholy pleasures, we should see in letters of fire, the unexpected summons to the judgment-seat of that God, whom we are resolutely defying? Sudden death, under any circumstances, is indeed sufficiently terrible. Even to the good it is very awful; and all of us, with good reason, in our beautiful Litany, pray to be delivered from it. But what must be its horrors to the wicked? to the wilfully wicked; to those upon whom all the patience, and correction, and long-suffering of

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God have been thrown away ; to those with whom advice, instruction, reproof, and warnings have been unavailing ?

To conclude, then ; in addition to the reflections thus arising more immediately from the text, allow me to add one other closely connected with it, and already slightly intimated, which may serve as its application. I have already observed, that the days of special miracle are past. The Almighty has now recourse to the ordinary means of Providence, for the most part, to check the sinner in his career. His covenant of mercy, His revealed will, His goodness and forbearance, the suggestions of His Holy Spirit, the examples of others, and the dictates of our own interest and common sense, are among these means of grace ; and he who despises them does it at the peril of his own soul. If a man die in his sins, with such guides, such checks, such monitors, let him not plead ignorance nor incapacity. Of that man, God Himself may justly inquire thus : ‘After having granted to all such light, such mercy, such long-suffering, can I “have any pleasure that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live”?’ And he is constrained to answer, ‘Thy ways, O Lord, are equal. It is not Thy will that one of these little ones should perish. It is man who is the promoter of his own ruin.’ Under such a scheme of mercy, then, none must expect a miracle to stay them in their iniquity ; to give them the warning of Belshazzar.

A. B. EVANS.

The Charge against Belshazzar.

The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. DANIEL v. 23.

I. GOD’S dealings towards us.

1. He keeps us in being. What a mercy it is to know that the key of the invisible world is in the hands of Jesus, and that we are each immortal till our work on earth is done ! The time of our departure is irreversibly fixed. It cannot be hastened. It cannot be deferred. ‘Thou knowest not what shall be on the morrow.’ We ought to be glad it is so. We should be unfitted for the duties of our daily life. This knowledge was of no use to good Hezekiah. How comforting, too, is the reflection that while we praise God day by day for our creation, we can also praise Him day by day for our preservation ; that He, in whose hand our breath is, will supply us with food and raiment, and every other necessary for maintaining the breath of our lives ; and that while the young lions may lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good !

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And this is our next thought. God not only keeps us in being, but also—

2. He arranges our affairs. How simply is that expressed by the words, 'whose are all thy ways.' Belshazzar forgot that God had made him king of Babylon. Yes, a man's ways are ordered of the Lord. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. God's eye, too, is ever watching us. 'All things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' 'Doth He not see my ways,' asks Job, 'and count all my steps?' 'Thou compassest my path,' says the Psalmist, 'and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.' And still more forcibly King Solomon tells us, 'Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?' Like Belshazzar, we too much forget this.

We now come to the other side of our subject.

II. Our duty towards God.

What is our duty towards God? Our duty towards God is to live to His glory. The neglect of this was the sin which the prophet Daniel charged upon Belshazzar: 'God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.' And now, you will ask, How can I glorify God? There are three ways, I conceive, in which this may be done. We glorify God—

1. By our repentance. In nothing can we poor poor sinners so glorify God as by casting ourselves at the foot of the Cross, there bewailing and lamenting our past sins, exclaiming, like those of old, 'We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God.'

But repentance is not enough. We also glorify God—

2. By our faith. Here was the sin of Belshazzar. He had no faith in God his Maker. Instead of glorifying God by his faith, he scorned and mocked the King of Heaven.

Once more. We glorify God not only by our faith and repentance, but also—

3. By our holiness. What was our Lord's own testimony? 'Hereby,' He says, 'is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' Not he that says, 'Lord, Lord,' glorifies God; but he that doeth God's will. But how can we be fruitful? Only in one way. Can a branch bring forth fruit, if it is cut off from the tree? No. It will presently wither and die. So is it with ourselves. 'If a man abide in Me,' says Jesus, 'the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me,' apart from Me, 'ye can do nothing.'

C. CLAYTON.


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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

An Apostolic Demand.

(Home Mission Sermon.)

For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. 2 CORINTHIANS X. 14-16.

I.  HERE was a collection at that time made everywhere for the poor of Jerusalem. It was part of the arrangement made between S. Paul and the other Apostles that wherever he went he should remember the poor; and accordingly we find in his epistles plain traces of what he did. Here at Corinth, where there was a great deal of wealth—it was probably the wealthiest place at that time of all the places in which S. Paul preached, because he had not yet come to Rome. Of all the places at which S. Paul preached up to that date there was none so wealthy as Corinth, and therefore it was necessary to press upon the Corinthians that this duty was specially incumbent upon them. We find the same thing was done, however, in other Churches—certainly done at Philippi and at other churches in Macedonia—and there can be no doubt that S. Paul made these collections wherever he went. This was a temporary thing, and it just lasted for the generation and for no more.

II. But, again, in the second place, from the earliest times we find that it was laid upon the people at large to maintain the Christian ministry. A Church was founded, and, as soon as a considerable body of disciples had been gathered together, it was laid upon them that it was their duty to Christ to see that the ministers who preached among them should be supported entirely by their help; they were to live of the gospel. S. Paul himself, in certain parts of his preaching of the gospel, maintained himself, or very nearly maintained himself; but he did it for a particular purpose, and in the doing of it he does not speak of it as if this were something excellent in him, and as if everybody was to follow his example. Quite the contrary, he speaks of it as a thing that he was permitted to do, not as a thing that everybody would be permitted to do. He was permitted to

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preach without receiving any support from his converts, he was permitted to maintain himself all the time. The rest of the ministers generally were not permitted to do anything of the sort, and we can see the reason: because it was of real importance that the ministers as a rule should give themselves wholly to the ministry, they should give themselves entirely to that work and not be compelled to withdraw their attention in order to obtain their livelihood. That was the second purpose for which money was everywhere required from the people, and that, it is plain, was a permanent purpose. It was not a temporary thing that was to last just for that generation, it was a permanent thing that was always to continue.

III. Then, again, in the third place, from the very beginning the Christians were called upon to contribute to the support of their own poor, of all those who were too aged, or too infirm, to maintain themselves. The Christian Church held it always as an imperative duty, and the Apostles plainly enough inculcated this duty, that there should be sufficient support provided for all those who were unable to work. Widows, for instance, when they were old and unable to work, were supported by the alms of the Church, and S. Paul, in one of his epistles, makes regulations about these widows—who were to claim this support, and who were not. The administration of this kind of charity was begun even in the Church at Jerusalem. There we find that the Apostles themselves had it in their hands at first, this administration of alms for the poor; but they were so taken up, as they ought to have been taken up, with their own proper duties as ministers of the gospel, that there was a great deal of discontent, and it was in consequence of this that the seven deacons were appointed in order that the administration of these alms should be in their hands, and that the Apostles should be free to do their own proper work, namely, to evangelise the world. This, then, is the third purpose, the maintenance of the poor. It must be remembered that this maintenance of the poor was very carefully attended to, and the Apostle is exceedingly stern in the rule he makes about it, because he lays down that ‘if any man will not work, neither let him eat.’ There was to be no alms-giving to them who could work and would not. But all alike were called upon to contribute to such a purpose.

IV. But there is a fourth purpose, and it is this fourth purpose which is spoken of here in the passage which I have read to you out of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, because here he speaks of support being given in what may be called the perpetual missionary work of the Church, that is, he was not content to remain at Corinth, it was not right he should. He was to go and preach to the Gentiles beyond Corinth—he did, in fact, go on to Illyricum—and plainly calls upon the Corinthian Church to provide the means of doing so.

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The rule of the gospel was that the ministers of the gospel should be maintained by those who had been converted to the gospel; but it is obvious enough that, until there was a Church gathered together, this could not be done. As long as the Church was very small in any particular place, the numbers very few, the provision would have been insufficient, and so accordingly S. Paul calls upon the Corinthian Church to give him the means of going on beyond them. He did not want it for himself—he could maintain himself, he proved it—but he did want it for others, for those who went with him to do this work. They were to preach the gospel as well as he, and they must be maintained, and the Lord had not given them permission to maintain themselves; very likely it would not have been possible for them to do both things as it was for S. Paul. They had no such permission. Who was to maintain them? The places to which they were sent could not maintain them—they were not yet converted, and for some time the converts would be too few to enable them to discharge this duty. The places to which they were sent could not do it, and it is plain that the places from which they were sent must do it, and the burden was consequently laid upon all Christians to contribute in this way to the work of the gospel in regions in their own neighbourhood where the provisions for the ministry was insufficient. This fourth purpose, you will observe, is really the form in which the first purpose is kept up. The first purpose of which I spoke was to maintain the poor at Jerusalem. But why was it necessary to maintain them? Because they had given all their substance in order to supply the means of preaching the gospel in the regions around them and beyond them, and consequently other churches were required to restore to them what they had thus bestowed. But other churches were not required to do what the Church at Jerusalem had done, namely, to throw all their property into one common stock for that purpose. What was it that was required of them? What was required of other churches was to contribute towards the missionary work.

Here, then, you have the four purposes for which men were then called upon to contribute, and three of them, it will be seen, are permanent purposes; and we have the sanction of God's Word, and Apostolic practice, for asking for your alms towards those three purposes. We have a right to ask the people of Christ to support the Christian ministry among themselves. If it be not adequately supported already it is their duty to make up what is wanted. In the next place we have a right to call upon Christians to assist in relieving the privations of the poor. There are those who are poor from misfortune, from illness, from accident, for old age, or the like. We call upon Christians to help us, we appeal to them for alms to be given at offertories for this purpose. This was required in the days

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of the Apostles, and it is equally required now. To a certain extent of course the State provides for these—the State, because it took up the Christian principle; but the State, from the nature of the case, cannot do much, cannot do all, there must be something left still for Christians to do, and, of course, the ministers of the gospel are required, as occasion serves, to put this demand before the people.

ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

No Prayer in Hell. IN the family of one who is now a peer of the realm, the most sovereign contempt was manifested by a valet of the house to family worship. Not satisfied with constantly absenting himself upon those occasions when prayer was observed in the house, he proceeded to show a yet more decided hatred to the service, and made a point to insult the whole family while at their devotions. For this purpose he contrived to place himself in the adjoining room to the one in which they had assembled; and by noise in whistling, singing, or throwing about the furniture, as his corrupt humour directed him, to turn, if he could, the whole solemnity into ridicule. It was impossible with impunity to pass over unnoticed an insolence so unpardonable. But without being supposed to know that this conduct of his was designed, his master took occasion to inquire of him how it was that he never attended family prayer. ‘Prayer!’ said he (and with the most impudent brow of scorn and derision), ‘I never did live in a praying family, and I never will.’ ‘True, my friend,’ replied his master, when he heard it, ‘you have for once spoken the truth. You never have known, it is plain, by what you have said, what prayer is, and the blessedness of it; and living and dying in this prayerless state, you never will. For in hell there are no prayers, and to that family you are hastening, and ere long will live in it for ever.’

Bold Preaching. ON one occasion the Rev. Frederick Robertson had been asked to preach at a church where the congregation was chiefly composed of those whom Pope describes as passing from ‘a youth of frolics,’ to ‘an old age of cards.’ His text was, ‘Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ The sermon was most impressive and eloquent, and bold in its denunciation. Returning home, he asked a gentleman if he thought he was right in

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preaching it. The gentleman replied, 'It was very truthful, but, considering the character of the clergyman whose pulpit you occupied by courtesy, and the character of the congregation, not a discreet sermon. It might have been as truthful without apparently setting both minister and people at defiance.' 'You are quite right,' he answered; 'but the truth was this; I took two sermons with me into the pulpit, uncertain which to preach; but just as I had fixed upon the other, something seemed to say to me, "Robertson, you are a craven, you dare not speak here what you believe"; and I immediately pulled out the sermon that you heard, and preached it as you heard it.'

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Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	PHILIPPIANS I. 3-11.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW XVIII. 21-35.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	DANIEL VI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	DANIEL VII. VER 9 OR DANIEL XII.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Love and Knowledge.

This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge. PHIL. i. 9.

I. ERE we see first what S. Paul takes for granted as the underlying substance, as the raw material, of divine life of the soul of man. 'This I pray, that your love may abound.' It is not this: 'I pray that your knowledge may abound yet more and more in love,' but, 'that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge.' And this order of the ideas, need I say, is by no means a rhetorical accident. Whenever in S. Paul's writings knowledge and love are put in competition with each other the precedence is assigned to love. For, as compared with knowledge, love is intrinsically a stronger thing, and it is worth more practically. To be knit to God by love is better, religiously speaking, than to speculate about Him, however rightly, as an abstract Being. To enwrap other men, perhaps multitudes, in the flame of a passionate

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enthusiasm for private or for public virtue, is better than to analyse in the solitude of a study rival systems of ethical, or social, or political truth. Each has its place, but love comes first. And if S. Paul said this, we may dare to say it was because the divine inspiration which swayed him overruled the natural bent of his mind, and forced him to recognise the primacy of love. For S. Paul, with all his passions, was, before everything else, a dialectician by nature. He bends here, as ever, to the intrinsic force of things—I would rather say to the genius of the gospel. Though he should ‘speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and had not charity,’ he was, he says, ‘but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.’ Knowledge, he knows, ‘puffeth up; charity edifieth.’ After that, in the wondrous providence of God the world through its philosophy knew not God, it pleased God, he says, through the foolishness of preaching—and the substance of that Charity was the Infinite Charity Himself—to save them that believe. The philosophy of the world, he tells the Corinthians, is folly with God. Charity, he maintains, is even greater than the great graces of faith and hope: how infinitely must it transcend—it is an *à fortiori* argument—mere knowledge! It may, indeed, be objected that if love is to exist at all, it must have an object, and that the loving soul must have some knowledge of this object. And reference may here be made to S. Peter’s precept, that Christians should give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity: where charity is clearly represented not as the foundation, but as the crowning of the spiritual edifice.

II. And, secondly, love is called forth by one specific kind of moral beauty—by generosity. The generosity of Jesus our Lord in giving Himself to become Incarnate, and to die for us poor sinners, appeals to the human heart even more powerfully than the faultless beauty of His character. The story of the Passion has melted heathen savages ere now to tears. The philosophy of self-sacrifice is always intelligible. ‘Scarcely for a righteous man,’ observes S. Paul, human life being what it is—‘will one die; yet, perchance, for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.’ He loved me, and gave Himself for me: this is a reflection which bids love spring up in the Christian heart; and thus ‘the love of Christ,’ generation after generation, ‘constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead, and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again.’

III. But, further, love is a distinct endowment. It is not certainly,

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it is not inevitably created by the great motives referred to acting upon our natural sense of fitness or beauty, or upon our natural conscience. There is much without us, there is much within us, God knows, ready to nip in the bud any fair flower, ready to stifle any pure and lofty impulse of the soul. The provocation from without must be reinforced, corresponded to by some heaven-sent influence within. And love accordingly, we are told, is an infused grace. 'The love of God,' says the Apostle, 'is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' What else might have been a passing gust of feeling, human, perhaps, down to the very verge of sin, is at once transfigured, strengthened, steadied, made permanent, by the breath of the Most Holy; it becomes henceforth a constant and powerful influence, penetrating, swaying, ruling the life. Yes, let us be sure, the fundamental thing in the regenerate soul is the love of Jesus Christ, God and Man. To love Jesus is to love the awful, the illimitable, the inaccessible God, so presented as to be within the compass of our finite capacities, condescending to us in a form in which He and His ineffable perfections have become, if I may dare to say it, concrete and intelligible. To love Jesus is to love man—man set before our eyes in such sort as worthily to claim our ungrudging love—man relieved from the dreadful entail of his own accumulating burden of corruption—man restored for once to a perfect correspondence, which is evident at a glance, with the primal sketch, with the complete idea, with the archetype of his being. And thus the love of Jesus is the common source of all that is on the one hand most truly spiritual religion, and of all that is on the other most fruitful and most creative in philanthropy. It is with S. Peter as with S. Paul, it is now as in the first age, it will be to the end of time as now, the fundamental thing is the religious life.

IV. But S. Paul would have this love abound in knowledge. The knowledge which S. Paul is thinking of is doubtless primarily religious knowledge. The higher knowledge—*πρόγνωσις* is the word, not mere *γνώσις*—is what he prays for as the outgrowth of learning. There is a period in the growth of love when such knowledge is imperatively required. In its earliest stages the loving soul lives only in the light and warmth of its object; it sees him, as it were, in a blaze of glory; it rejoices to be before him, to be beneath him, to be close to him; it asks no questions, it has no heart for scrutiny, it only loves; it loves and worships, it worships and loves again; it passes its moments, it exhausts its energies in a well-nigh uninterrupted, unsuspended ecstasy. But from the nature of the case this period comes to an end, not because love grows cold, but because it becomes exacting. Love cannot live for ever in a cell apart from thought, from society—apart from the many influences which may

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too easily, if neglected, act upon it as a destructive solvent. No man, it has been said, can permanently keep his philosophy in one department of his mind and his devotion in another. And this being so, love has sooner or later to come to a sort of understanding with thought, both public and private thought, in order to live. Love must, from the necessity of the case, know something accurately about its object. What is he? Whence is he? What can be known of his ways, of his works, of his will? It is easy enough to say that love ought not to ask questions: sooner or later it will ask them; and if these questions are not wisely or truly answered—if, instead of knowledge, nothing better than guessings, surmises, or, worse, myths and fables, are forthcoming, then love in its deep disappointment will sicken and die; it will recoil with a sense of weary languor from the object on which its gaze has been so intensely fixed; it will feel that He cannot really satisfy its own enthusiasm about Him unless He, the same yesterday and for ever, if He be, shall stand out before it in distincter outline—unless it, love itself, shall grow more and more in such knowledge as it may.

H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

Divine Upholding.

Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. PHILIPPIANS i. 6.

I. VERY one who has begun in earnest to serve and please God must have the question at times presented to him, 'Shall I persevere unto the end?' He knows that God has upheld him, but he is tormented with the question, will God hold him up notwithstanding his own constant falling away? He is tempted, perhaps, to magnify unduly these fallings away, but he is not the less disturbed at the thought of them.

II. Now this passage gives to a sincere believer, all the consolation and good hope possible, if he continues to lay hold of God, but he must do that. The good work which God has begun and will continue is his sanctification. If he desires, and prays, and takes pains that this may continue, then he can most assuredly realise the blessedness of the Apostolic promise; but if he does not, if he quits his hold upon God, then all is doubt, all is uncertainty.

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What he has to do is to lay hold on God again, to return to Him with deep contrition, to pray God with all the earnestness that his soul is capable of, that he may recover lost ground, that God would renew in him whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by his own carnal will and frailty.

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Self-abnegation.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. S. MATTHEW xviii. 28.



VER against this parable of Christ's, stand in the epistle to the Romans some brief but pointed words of S. Paul's. They are these: 'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom. . . . Owe no man any thing, but to love one another'

Are these two passages contradictory, or irreconcilable? At the first glance they seem so. For at the first glance it is evident that an inspired Apostle does not regard debt, whether it be national or individual debt, as a national or individual blessing, differing thus from some moderns who are quite clear as to the blessing of both. On the contrary, he forbids debt in language as authoritative as it is explicit. 'Owe no man any thing' is a proposition of the most definite meaning stated in the most transparent language. On the other hand, here is this parable of Christ's, not so precise, nor so mandatory, but equally clear in its drift, and equally positive in its emphasis.

The emphasis of what Christ has to say is to be found in its message not to the debtor, but to the creditor. If you are a debtor, it is the emphasis of the New Testament everywhere that you are to pay your debt. 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' is Christ's form of that precept which the Apostle utters when he enjoins, 'owe no man any thing.' Debt is misery, bondage, the loss of independence, and with it, alas! too often the loss of a fine conscience, of manhood, of a lofty sense of equity and rectitude and justice. But there are times when a man is a debtor through no fault of his own; there are times, in a word, when every reasonable expectation is dis-

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appointed, and when one finds himself powerless to discharge obligations simply because he finds himself bound up in that great network of human obligations which go to make up trade, society, nay, human life, itself, and in which he is an unwilling debtor to another, simply because some others are even more unwilling debtors to him.

I. Now at this point it is that there enters the significance of that parable from which I have taken the text. Amidst the ordinary commerce of life there are constantly arising occasions when other men and women fail in their obligations to us. Somehow or other they are our debtors. They have come under distinct obligations to us, and those obligations, for one and another reason, they fail to pay. How now are we to treat such persons? Two lines of conduct lie open before us which are plainly enough indicated in the language of the parable. One of them is that described in the text. Are you a creditor? Very well, then. Take your debtor by the throat (the law allows you to do so), and crowd him hard up against the statute until you have expressed out of him the last jot and tittle that is due to you. That is one course, and if you follow it, no man can say that you have not acted within the limits of absolute legality. It is not a very elevated or engaging rule of life, but that fact, to many minds, is more than counterbalanced by the consideration that it is the rule of life which governs the vast majority of human beings. In a word, disguise it as we may, the first impulse of humanity is to take its fellow-man by the throat crying, 'Pay me that thou owest!'

Surely, it may be said, there is a time in our dealings with others when we may fully insist upon our dues, and when to forego such insistence is simply to encourage unscrupulous aggression and dishonesty. Surely, there are some insolent offenders against one's rights whose offences are so rank and grave that simple justice to others, if not to one's-self, demands their rebuke. Undoubtedly, and it is the glory of human society, that society itself sooner or later lays its hand upon such offenders and deals with them more justly and summarily than any one individual can possibly do. There comes a time when Shylock's cruel exaction against Antonio becomes the quarrel of all Venice, and when all classes of society and all the powers of the state unite in making the grasping Israelite a warning for all time. But ordinarily the issues that divide us from our fellows are far more trivial than this. When we are most noisily insisting upon our dues, has it ever occurred to us to pause and think how small was the debt which was owing to us? Oh, could we gather together the claims against our fellow men and women which we have accounted just claims, and concerning which our hearts have burned with resentment and our cheeks flushed with anger—the petty miserable quarrels and heart-burnings about questions of precedence,

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about some unintentional slight, about the ten thousand minor collisions which jar and irk us in life—what a contemptible catalogue it would be ! And we who have done so as often as not, profess and call ourselves the disciples of a crucified Christ ! Shame on us that we have so poorly learned the lesson of His gospel or the meaning of His Cross.

II. For when we come to look at either of these, what is so sublimely significant as the utter absence in them of any clamouring for dues—any insistence on the part of the Saviour of the race of what men owed to Him ? It would be worth our while to sit down and read the Gospels through, to see if we can find anywhere an instance in which Christ ever reminded men of what they owed to Him. There is one indeed, in which at the first glance there seems to be something like the assertion of such a claim, but the moment that we look at it a little closer we see in it only a new and more wonderful illustration of that self-abnegation which is at once the distinction of Christ and the glory of His religion. It is when Simon the Pharisee, having bidden Jesus to his table, is shocked at His familiarity with an erring woman who has literally crawled up to and crouched at His feet and is covering them with her embraces. It is in justification of her that Christ replies to the offended conventionalist, 'Thou gavest Me no water to wash My feet, but this woman hath washed them with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but since I came in she hath not ceased to kiss My feet.' But we miss the significance of Christ's language here, entirely, if we merely imagine Him to be rebuking Simon's neglect of what was due to Him by means of a courteous innuendo. On the contrary, He mentions Himself only to excuse the Magdalene, and it is plain from the beginning to the end of the scene that He is not thinking of what another had owed Him, but rather of what her supreme devotion, which so outran all measurement of mere custom or due, had freely given to Himself.

There are men and women the world over who in the home, and the family, in their pleasures as in their duties, amid the thousand strifes and rivalries that enter into life, have not insisted upon their dues ; but, remembering how one to whom they owe so much, has been most patient and tender with them, have striven to translate that same patience which they have learned of Him into forgiveness and forbearance towards others. They may not get the most money, or the best places, or the most obsequious salutations. But these are the men and women whom humanity will carry on its lips and in its heart.

H. C. POTTER.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY

Forgiveness.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. S. MATTHEW xviii. 35.

I. **T**HE teaching of this parable is exceedingly plain, and, we should think, unmistakable. It is this, that want of charity casts a man out of grace, even the grace of forgiveness: so that the burden of his former sins is again laid upon him.

This parable teaches us, what a great number of other places do, such particularly as S. Matthew vi. 15, that our continuing in a state of forgiveness entirely depends upon our continuing in a state of charity.


II. Some speak of the uncharitable servant as not being really forgiven, for, they say, if he had really been forgiven, he would have extended forgiveness to his fellow-servant; but we seem to be taught exactly the contrary. 'I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.' If the king of the parable represents God, it is impossible to imagine that anything which He says is not real and to be taken in its literal meaning. And surely there is enough amongst religious people to teach us that a man who is certain that God has forgiven him may be uncharitable, bitter, and even malicious.

M. F. SADLER.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Private Prayer.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house: and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. DANIEL vi. 10.

I.  **H**ARDLY think that any one, after reading this text, can set up the plea that he has not leisure for prayer three times a day. If Daniel had, who has not? If that man of wonderful business always upon his shoulders and his mind, could find the leisure to go to his room three times a day to pray, where is there a man upon this earth who cannot? But if it happen that

any man, being separate from his chamber, at a distance, cannot go within the closed door, let that man endeavour to set apart a certain

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portion of the day—a certain hour, or half hour, or ten minutes—as they come round regularly; and make a little sanctuary for himself in his own closed thoughts, for his mid-day communion with his God. So that, if he cannot command the quietness and secrecy of the closet, he may command sanctuary feelings though not in the common sanctuary place. And you remember that our blessed Lord's closet was the mountain-top. Therefore, though a man be out in the fields, though he may be in his office, or ordinary routine vocation, yet that man can have his regular hours when he can have the presence of his God in prayer.

Now, remember that all distinct acts of prayer are chiefly valuable as promoting the general habit of prayerfulness in the mind. There is a danger when we speak of the importance of prayer so many times a day, of persons running away with the thought that that is enough; that that is all the prayer required. But to very little profit will be prayer three times a day in the closet, if it does not minister to an habitual uplifting of the heart in dependence and praise all the day long. Had you lived with S. Paul and Daniel, I do not suppose you would have found those men's prayers only in separate, certain, defined hours, but in a constant praying mind; and that is implied in the Apostle's words, 'Instant in prayer.' But as the body cannot be in health without regular meal-times, so the soul could not be in health unless it had separate, regular times for communion with God. Therefore, the general prayerful habit always indicates the necessity of regularity and precision in the particular times, places, and manner of prayer.

II. Perhaps it would be almost impossible for one man to guide another as to how he should arrange his morning, his mid-day, and his evening supplications. Many persons have found it a salutary and happy way to devote their mid-day supplications very much to intercessory prayer. The evening will always necessarily take the most penitential prayer. The morning, perhaps, as rightly, will be the more joyous. In the morning we cast ourselves in our confidences upon God; we make dedication of ourselves to God; we implore the influence we need for the coming duties. In the evening we look back upon the past, thank Him for mercies, humble ourselves before Him for sins.

Live very much in your prayers from morning to evening, and from evening to morning. Prayer need not go much further back. You need not take retrospects of sins in years gone by, but of sins since last you asked forgiveness only. 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' You need not look forward to to-morrow's difficulties; 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' Deal with that in your next express act of communion with God.

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But remember that all your greatness depends on your nearness to God. Always look to that first; for, as with Daniel, so with you, the success of all the outer life will depend upon that which is going on behind the scenes. A man depends upon that which is going on alone between him and his God. You sometimes speak of a man for his beauty of character, forgetting all his wrestling with God. There is the man. Oh, every man is really what he is in eternity, by what he is when he is alone with God.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Eternal Life.

This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. S. JOHN xvii. 3.

I.  HE belief in eternal life is one of the most persistent, the most diffused, and closely cherished, of all our beliefs. It assumes every variety of form, and traverses every scale of the intellectual ladder from the lowest to the highest. To the educated and spiritually-minded it is a belief in the survival under unknown conditions of a soul in union with God. To the earthly it is of the earth earthy, a belief in the mere prolongation of our present life, richer in sensuous joys, freed from the carking care of labour, an indefinite period of tranquil rest and enjoyment. The general diffusion of the belief is a clear matter of experience. So much is this the case that it may be questioned whether any one really thinks of himself as dead. We often, as age creeps on us, are led to contemplate our own decease, we picture its effects on those who are interested in us, in the events which accompany or follow it. But even while thus engaged as we think in recognising to the full the transitory condition of our lives, we catch ourselves involuntarily taking our own place in the events we picture; we still regard ourselves as interested in the effects our death has caused, in the feelings it has aroused, and often check ourselves with a grim smile at the absurdity of what we are doing, an absurdity brought home to us by the sad experience of universal decay, but which somehow or other we cannot as a matter of fact realise.

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If the belief in some form of eternal life is general, the desire for it is even more universal. We have but to look at the wonderful effect of the great doctrine of the resurrection to be sure of this. It was this which formed the great instrument in the hands of the earliest Christian teachers. To a people and to an age full of oppression, injustice, and violence, it spoke in words of irresistible power. No authority, no preconceived idea, no time-honoured religious sanction, could withstand the triumphant growth of the hope that a time was before long coming for the restitution of liberty and justice. And from that time onwards millions of distressed souls for whom the world has seemed a strange anarchy, where wrong triumphed, and sorrow and suffering was an universal law, have found their comfort in the hope that the cure was to be in the future life, 'where the wicked would cease from troubling and the weary be at rest.' For centuries, throughout the western world at least, the general morality of the great bulk of the people has rested almost exclusively on the hopes and fears which were centred on that eternal life; and, in the vista of rewards and punishments which it opened, religious teachers have found and still find the strongest ground on which to rest their arguments.

In the presence of this universal desire and this universal belief, it is well to see what the reported words of our Lord say upon the subject. The fullest and most pregnant utterance is perhaps that which I have chosen for my text: 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send—Jesus Christ.' The knowledge of God is eternal life.

If this be so, the vaunt of theology, that it is the science of sciences, seems no vain one. It must embrace within itself all other forms of knowledge, for its object is the highest; and, brought to its perfection, it is itself eternal life.

II. Beyond the learning of books and of the experience of everyday life, there lies that learning which is won by experience of another sort, by living the life of God. When once we will to do the will of God, and put our will into action, further knowledge comes. It is then that we begin to reach its highest forms. It is not indeed the fulness of God we are to know. Such things pass our knowledge; such perfection we must leave aside; but we may at least know the truth of the doctrine of Jesus. God has not only declared Himself in His working in the universe, not only in the growth and development of the human mind and the human race; He has expressed Himself more clearly still in the voice and life of His Word, Jesus Christ. And it is in living a life in accordance with the will of God, made clear to us first in the universe and then in that holy life, that we have forced upon us, by a personal experi-

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ence, which we cannot contradict, the truth of the great doctrine which Christ taught; and in that doctrine we find the step we were wanting. We seem to come to eternal life itself.

The essence of the good news which Christ brought was the union of God and man. The great gift which, as He declared, He left behind Him was the constant presence within ourselves of God's Spirit. And what is this union but eternal life?

It is not good to call back to life old controversies or to puzzle over the differences of such words as eternal and everlasting. It leads to no good results to consider what may be the character of that changed body with which S. Paul tells us we shall be clothed, or the conditions of that everlasting life of which all we can say is that we have Christ's own word that sublunary relations shall pass away, that there shall be neither marriage nor giving in marriage. Enough for us that, however it may be clothed, the eternal part of us is our spirit, that the eternal life we believe in and long for is the life of that spirit in the immediate presence of God, and that our eternity depends upon the eternity of God. And this is no mere barren phrase or fruitless speculation. It is full of comfort and of hope. As we see the decay of all things around us, the apparent waste of life and energy, the profound insignificance in the great scheme of the world of each individual life, we may be seized with shuddering fear lest the life which seems so far off should be no reality. From such despair and dread this knowledge saves us, for the life of the spirit and the life of God know neither beginning nor end, nor any lapse of time. It leads directly to the sanctification of every act of life, to pure and consistent conduct, to the possession of the power of triumphing in the moral struggle in which we are all engaged.

Knowledge, forced on us in a thousand ways, by learning, by observation, by experience, and hallowed by the object for which it is pursued, opens to us the will of God. A knowledge of the will of God we might hope as reasonable beings would lead us to live in accordance with that will. To thwart it would seem an act of strange perversity, yet we can and do, even though knowledge is there, often act in opposition to it. But there is a further knowledge which comes from living the life of God, which teaches us that we can make that will and our will one and the same, which fills us with certainty of our union with God. And in the splendid certainty that we are His children and one with Him, we may find the power which no antagonistic force can resist, and which even now and here opens for us the gates of eternal life.

J. F. BRIGHT.

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Faith and a Good Conscience.

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. I TIMOTHY i. 19.

I. **W**HAT is this faith that the blessed Apostle desires Timothy to hold? You observe that he unites it here as well as in other passages in this pastoral epistle with the conscience. First, let me say that I do not believe that the faith here spoken of signifies that depositum of doctrine which God, in His mercy, has been pleased to commit to the custody of the sacred treasury, the Church, which is His Body; or the totality of all the dogmas which constitute the law of our life, when we apprehend them by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that in the long-run constitute the moral grandeur of every nation in which the gospel of Christ is preached, and which constitute, moreover, the foundation of national greatness and national stability. I don't believe for one moment that these are represented by the faith of which the Apostle here speaks. Neither do I think that the Apostle here means the bare assent of the understanding to historical fact; and the reason I do not think that the Apostle here means by faith the bare assertion of the understanding to historical fact is this, that I have yet to learn the connection there is between the information of the understanding and the quickening of the conscience. I believe, on the contrary, that every department of literature can be cited to establish the doctrine that a man may believe very rightly and act very wrongly. Do we not see this in ordinary life? How many there are of us whose painful experience it is to observe the friends of our youth wrecked upon the troubled sea of sin. Have they surrendered their intellectual belief in certain dogmas which they held in common with us in days gone by? Do we not see one of the great sins that is overmastering the manhood of England at the present time, I mean intemperance? And you will see men who know perfectly well the influence of strong drink upon the blood, the fibre, the muscle, and upon the brain; but the knowledge of this disastrous and destructive influence does not make them sober. I might proceed in this line to cite from all branches of literature to show you how powerless information is to touch the conscience; how powerless knowledge is to quicken that inner life, which can be only quickened by the supernatural touch of the Holy Ghost. And because we see this I will ask you to believe that the word faith here does not mean the mere assent of the intelligence to divine dogma. Nor does the faith spoken of here mean the object of

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faith, I mean God ; God who expressed Himself once for all in Jesus Christ. I cannot believe that faith means this ; for this reason, that the text does not say so. I rather think it implies that disposition of the spirit engendered by the Holy Ghost, upon the basis of the knowledge we receive upon the divine things, leading man to acknowledge his dependence upon God ; that confidence in God, through Christ, which unites the soul on earth to God in heaven ; which enables us to realise the invisible ; which brings eternity itself within the range of our anxieties and within the range of our prospects. This simple trust, this confidence in God, this affiancing of the soul in God, is the faith which S. Paul here implores Timothy to keep on board his ship in the voyage. And will you not agree with me when I ask you to remember the important place that this occupies in our Lord's teaching, as well as in the practical application of His teaching to every day life ? See how the supernatural energies of the Son of God went out upon the objects that crowded upon His beneficent path as He walked from Judea in the south to Samaria in the centre, and from the centre to the north. See how, without almost a single exception, He rewards faith, how He commends its presence, and censures its absence from those who ought to have possessed it. Men taunt us, and say, 'You preachers are always glorifying faith ; why, it would almost appear as though there were no other Christian virtue to be exalted !' And yet when you turn to ordinary life, you cannot hesitate to admit that faith, trust, occupies as prominent a position in common life as it occupies in religion. There is not a trader in the country, there is not a merchant in any exchange in Europe, there is not a man in business, a physician, or a lawyer, but must be content to say with the Christian, 'We walk by faith and not by sight.' God has made the same principle prevalent in common life as in religious life. Does it not occupy an important place in personal religion ? What are the Sacraments of the Church apart from the living faith ? The Church requires repentance and faith of those who come to be baptized ; her voice to her penitents as they approach the table of the Lord is, 'Draw near in faith.' The admonition of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever he may have been, declares that a man may preach, but it will be of no profit if it be not in faith. As you go on in life, as you grapple for your very soul's existence, progress, purity, and power with temptations which, if not overcome, will overcome you, you will learn before very long that you will not master sin apart from faith in God through Christ. And so we see what this faith is. Moreover, this faith is a purifying principle. Necessarily so, because it unites the soul on earth to the centre of purity. This faith is an exalting principle, because it elevates a man by giving him the nature of Him in whom he reposes, and since it is

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a purifying and exalted principle, and since it thus unites man to God, it follows, almost in the way of natural consequence, that the conscience of the man becomes quickened, becomes invigorated, since in religion he sees, under the influence of the power of God, that he has simple faith in his Lord; and he regards matters in a totally different light, until his whole soul becomes the shrine of the Spirit of God. And thus the conscience which shared our ruin, our physical and intellectual fall, shares the blessings of spiritual life through the power of God the Holy Ghost. The result is that the conscience that was once dormant becomes awake; the conscience that was once inclined to err becomes corrected, and man becomes extremely sensitive to duty; he lives in a totally different atmosphere because he is under the influence of the sovereign Lord of life, whose own shrine the conscience of man becomes.

II. And now you have followed me thus far, you will see that this good conscience will be exercised in two departments; first in the adoration of God, secondly in the service of man. In the adoration of God, in meditation upon God's most blessed Word, in finding in that Word your strength in weakness, your guide in perplexity, your highest ethical ideal, and the guardian of the loftiest sphere of morals, in addition to which you will exercise this good conscience in supplication and in prayer; you will adore God and thank Him for what He has given, and praise Him for what He is. And then turning to the practical side of life, as it is under the influence of a good conscience, you will see what service you can render to those who are about you.

Now observe this statement of the Apostle. 'Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.' This appears to be a rather overcharged statement. I could quite understand the blessed Apostle saying that if a man had not obeyed the directions of his conscience with regard to the service of God and the service of men; I could quite understand that if a man neglected the study of God's blessed Word, that when some sorrow came to him his mind would begin to work, his sorrow would be poignant, and he might say that this affliction was sent to him to remind him of this neglect. And it might be so. But what I want to impress upon you is, that sad as such a soul may be when he confesses that the memory of sin is grievous, and the burden is intolerable; in addition to this the Apostle states that he who neglects the directions of conscience is making shipwreck of the whole faith. In other words, that neglected Christian duty seems to imperil the belief in Christian doctrine; that if you are disobedient to the voice of God within in your conscience, you will not only have the pain and the sorrow of that particular disobedience, but in addition to this a weakness of will, and slowness of resolve, and the various evils that follow

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upon disobedience. In addition to and beyond all, you render the ship of your soul likely to be wrecked upon the rocks that are ahead of you, or if not wrecked upon the rocks you will founder in the storm. This, certainly, is a very solemn thought. There is an old German picture of which I have read. It represents a young man fresh in all the freshness of youth, and yet his face is saddened. He is playing a game of chess with the great enemy of souls. There is a malicious grin upon the face of the infernal fiend; he has won game after game, and man after man, and there is behind the young man, drawn upon the picture, the image of his guardian angel, and he looks in sadness upon the certain end that is before the youth who is thus being beaten in the game of chess by his enemy and ours. That is a picture! How do I know, now, whether that picture is not being worked out in stern reality amongst some of those here to-day? For the men upon the chess-board may represent duty to God and duty to man. It may be that Holy Communion is abandoned, prayer is forgotten, the Word is ignored; at length the whole life is gone, and with life gone, love is gone; and both are gone through the good conscience being thrown overboard. If you would avoid this, then hold faith and a good conscience; do no violence to it or disobey it. See the sea of moral life around you strewn with moral wreckage; and if the sight of this does not restrain you, then, at least, remember that with each act of disobedience the devil's hand is upon the chess-board.

DEAN LEFROY.

A Great Alternative.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. HEBREWS x. 39.

I. TWO characters are here, two minds and the two lives which they shape and rule. One of these is indicated by the peculiar phrase drawing in. The captain of the vessel reads the prognostics of the coming gale, and he draws in, he shortens, or even furls his sail. This is made the picture of a possibly alternative character. These Hebrews were Christians, and indeed they were Christians of a very marked experience, and of a very bright past. They had tasted, the epistle itself says, the goodness of the Word of God, and even the powers of a world to come. They had borne persecution for the Word's sake. Many theologians would have guaranteed them for a consistent course and a safe arrival. The inspired writer does not so. He contemplates the possibility, after all this, of a fatal and final fall from grace. Short of this, he sets before them the danger of what he calls a drawing in, a reserve, a caution, a timid

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prudence in their religion, which may even have the same end as an open drawing back.

II. The drawing in of which we speak, though its motives may vary, has many common characteristics. Of course, it withholds altogether from the stock of Christian evidences in the world its own quota of faith and practice. This is not nothing, for it is by the separate contributions of believing and faithful people that the aggregate of gospel wealth is made up. Ask individual men and women why they are Christians: for one who speaks of books or sermons, fifty, a hundred will adduce the influence of Christian example and Christian persuasion as having been the motive power over themselves. To draw in is to impoverish the treasury, to subtract so many of these influences from that sum-total of that power which is acting upon mankind in Christ's behalf. Nor is it only upon others that this reserve tells. The text speaks of it as having a terrible effect upon the man himself: it speaks of drawing in unto perdition. That last state, over which Scripture draws at once an awful and a merciful veil, is here connected significantly with a life of reserve in reference to Christ Himself. Not in vain, we may be quite sure, did He speak on earth of that confessing or denying Him before men which is to bring with it His confession or His denial of the man himself before His Father and the holy angels. Oh! it is bad for the man himself to have lived this life of religious reserve. If it were but the suppression of truth, we know that it might be near akin to falsehood. There is a hypocrisy of dissembling, never let us forget it, quite as real as the more vulgar yet also less common hypocrisy of pretence. It is an untruthful thing to pass for that which you are not, even if it makes you out worse than you are. There is no virtue in the false witness which is against yourself; the effect is falsehood, be the motive for it what it may. Let us learn from the subject which is engaging us the responsibility to one another, the responsibility to ourselves, the responsibility to the cause of truth and good in the world, of being plain and straightforward as Christian people. The Epistle connects it with the ordinance of worship. 'Forsake not,' it says, 'the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.' Worship ought to be, how seldom it is, the confession of Christ. We ought to be glad of the opportunity of confessing in this world-church and church-world of the present; we have none too many of such opportunities. We ought to endeavour to make worship confession—confession of Christ, I mean—by earnestness, by devotion, by intense absorption in the thing we come to do. We are here to throw away reserve, to break the bad silence, to profess the faith, to make this the description of each gathering together, 'I believe, and therefore have I spoken;' most of all in that service which is the very

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commemoration of the crucified Lord, the very claiming of the benefits of His Passion, the very showing forth of His death till He come. Here is that unreserve which is all of good, and has no alloy of evil in it, here, and in one other thing which the context allies with it; 'Exhorting one another.' Let us read this word also more exactly: 'encouraging one another.' Yes, it is that thought of which the gospel is so full, that thought, hopeful and helpful; not preaching, not scolding, not threatening, but saying in word and tone, 'Listen for and listen to the crying voice behind thee, each one: This is the way; walk thou in it. Come with us in sweet Christian companionship; come ye and let us walk together in the light of the Lord.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Forgiveness a Victory. A MORE glorious victory cannot be gained over another man than this, that when the injury began on his part S. MATT. xviii. 21. the kindness should begin on ours.

Fulness of Grace. S. AUSTIN, wondering at the overflowing measure of God's spirit in the Apostles' hearts, observes that the reason PHIL. i. 5-8. why they were so full of God was, because they were so empty of His creatures. 'They were very full,' he says, 'because they were so very empty;' because they were so very empty of the spirit of the world, therefore they were so full of the spirit of God.

God's Grace. As by the grace of God we are what we are, so by His PHIL. i. 5-8. grace it is we are not what we are not.

Means of Grace. HE that hopes for the inheritance will make much of the conveyance. PHIL. i. 5-8.

God the Source of Grace. GOD is a fountain from which each draws water according to his needs: he who needs six buckets draws six; he who needs three, three; the bird who only requires to wet his beak, just pecks at the water, the pilgrim draws from the fountain in the hollow of his hand.

Twenty=Third Sunday after Trinity.

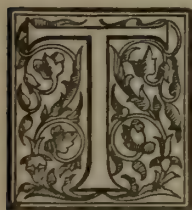
Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	. . . . .	PHILIPPIANS III. 17-21.
GOSPEL,	. . . . .	S. MATTHEW XXII. 15-22.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	. . . . .	HOSEA XIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	. . . . .	JOEL II. VER. 21 OR JOEL III VER. 9.
SECOND LESSONS,	. . . . .	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Wisdom of Christ.

He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. S. MATTHEW xxii. 20-22.



THESE words contain a peculiarly characteristic example of our Saviour's mode of teaching, and a profound evangelical principle, applicable to all religious study and instruction.

I. He is at Jerusalem, He is in the Temple. Thither the best and the worst of the nation were gathered together. All the sects, leaders and followers, were there, bent on their several ends.

All the people were there, filled with the one impulse which swayed every Jewish heart at the time of the great festival of the Passover. In the midst of them stood one, who was amongst them but not of them; with His own end clear before Him, an end for which He came to bear witness, and for which He was born into the world, but

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an end which soared above the highest imagination of those who were gathered around Him and were seeking to make Him their own. He is to cross their path shortly in a still higher path, and to a still higher end. But now He crosses them in turn, one by one, as a teacher, and the first and most striking example is that contained in the text. Two of the great sections of the Jewish Church and nation approach. They are the Pharisees and Herodians. They have contended for years on one, as it seemed to them, all-important question. 'Was it the duty of the chosen people to submit to the Roman yoke, or to resist?—were they to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?' Everything presented itself to them through that medium. To determine the question on the one side or the other was the great need, which they both sought to supply. There was no escape, as they supposed, from one or other of the two horns of this dilemma; on one or other their victim must be transfixed; on one or other they must receive satisfaction.

It was exactly in this very confidence that they were both disappointed. What they had said with a dim perception of the character which they only partially understood, was the very rock and corner stone on which they stumbled and were crushed. 'The Master' whom they approached was indeed 'true, and taught the way of God in truth; neither did He care for any man, for He regarded not the person of men.' He, the great questioner of mankind, the true discoverer of hearts, burst through this haze of self-illusion, by the same methods (humanly speaking) as that ancient catechiser, the father of human philosophy, had done before Him in the market-place of Athens. He met them with a searching question and with a homely fact: 'Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute-money.' From wide-reaching theories, from hopes of accomplished vengeance, from dreams of successful intrigues, they were brought down, as were the sophists of old, to gather round a small, solid, indisputable fact. We know the appearance of that fact even now. It has been often described; it may still be seen—the little silver coin, bearing on its surface the head encircled with a wreath of laurel and bound round with the sacred fillet—the well-known features, the most beautiful and the most wicked, even in outward expression, of all the Roman Emperors—with the superscription running round, in the stately language of Imperial Rome, *Tiberius Cæsar, divi Augusti filius Augustus, Imperator.* He looked on the face, He looked on the inscription; as the coin lay on the outstretched palm of His tempters. He asked again, with that same art of the master of ancient irony, 'Whose is this image and superscription?' 'They say unto Him' (they could not but say unto Him) the Imperial name, 'It is Cæsar's.' 'Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto

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Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' The distinction which they had tried to draw between the two conflicting duties vanished away in those words, drawn from a higher than any earthly source. What was due to Cæsar could not be taken from God; what was due to God could not be taken from Cæsar: by giving to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, the things that are God's are also given to God; by rendering to God the things that are God's the things of Cæsar are also given to Cæsar.

Their snare, so skilfully laid on the right hand and on the left, had broken down. He had passed unmoved through the midst of their scholastic distinctions, as He passed unharmed through the midst of the raging multitude. Their serried ranks had opened before Him. A third course of which they had not dreamed was His natural path. Pharisee and Herodian alike were defeated. He was above and beside and beyond their mark—'They marvelled, and left Him, and went their way.'

II. Before we look at the meaning of the words in detail, let us for a few moments pause on the general lesson that it conveys, both as to the mind which was in Christ Jesus and as to our imitation of it. Of all the incidents in the gospel history, there is perhaps none which brings out more fully the most individual peculiarity (so to speak) of His doctrine and character. The characteristic is what a celebrated Christian philosopher of Germany condensed into one pregnant word, more suggestive than many elaborate expositions, and which our less complex language is unable to render by any single expression, *Schicksalslosigkeit*—freedom from the control of destiny, elevation above the level of the fate, the circumstance, the age, in which all around Him were enveloped. They, all wrapt in the narrow folds of their own controversies, parties, systems—they, all moving, as by a tragical irresistible doom, to the destruction which awaited their church and commonwealth; He, sweeping through and beside and athwart all these, with a loneliness of purpose and aim, which cost Him His life as He passed onward through the opposing obstacles—dying in the conflict, yet rising triumphant out of it, over fate, and death, and the grave. It is this part of His course which, above all others, is in one sense inimitable; which brings us so near to the source from whence He came, that the example almost vanishes from our view in the distance from which we contemplate it.

III. The question was put to Him, not sincerely, but 'tempting Him,' and therefore (in one sense) the answer was no answer at all. He took them in their own craftiness; He dealt with them as God ever deals with insincere inquirers, with onesided and unfair search after truth—He silenced without instructing them: He went upon His own lofty course without deigning to decide a mere local and

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temporary controversy. But as there was something in the question of more than transient interest, so there was in the answer something more than a mere rebuke to obstinate and prejudiced minds, a wisdom even beyond that divine indifference, if we may so term it, which I have just ventured to describe.

Insincere as the question was, yet the very fact of putting it at all, the marvel with which they received the answer, shows that they who put it believed it to be a great perplexity, and that their own solution would have been widely different. The Pharisees, in the excess of their religious zeal, could not imagine that any one professing to be a religious teacher could recognise the authority of a heathen power. The Herodians, in the excess of their worldly prudence, could not imagine that any one could share that prudence except those who shared their own worldly spirit. The possibility of an answer which should unite the two had never occurred to either of them for a moment. To each of these opposite frames of mind, our Lord's reply conveyed a lesson of universal truth. The image and superscription told them with indisputable clearness to what government they owed allegiance, and to what great power they owed the unexampled peace, which had now for thirty years reigned through the civilised world. Into any further questions He entered not. Whether that government were heathen or Jewish; whether its blessings were combined with dark idolatries or pure faith, was not now the point; it could not alter the facts of the case, as acknowledged by themselves; and, therefore, that union of respect to the authority of Cæsar and the authority of God, which Pharisee and Herodian alike thought impossible, He pronounced to be possible and necessary. 'Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' Though the government of Rome was despotic, and they had once been free; though the worship of Rome was heathen, and they were the chosen people of Jehovah; though Tiberius Cæsar was stained with crime and tyranny, and they were the guardians of the highest morality of mankind; yea, if there was anything due to him by their own acknowledgment and confession, anything which was duly his on the natural principles of right and justice, they were to render it back to him; and in that very act they were rendering it back to God.

1. 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' Render—so we may first apply it to subjects which our studies inevitably force upon our notice—render to those old heathen times of which we are taught to think and read so much, render to them the praise and honour which is really theirs. Render it, not covertly, furtively, timidly, as though it were a condemned, contraband, suspected concession. Render it openly, fearlessly, religiously, as the doctrine

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of Him who has told us how He will call the nations before His throne, and render to each according to their good or evil works: as the doctrine of the Apostle who has told us, that when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, and show the work of the law written on their hearts; as the doctrine of the early Fathers, who have told us that the heathen sages and heroes lived and taught by the inspiration of the spirit of Christ.

2. Render their due, if to the heathen, then still more the nearer due, whatever it be, to all those whom we condemn, or who condemn us, in the thousand varieties of opinion which intersect the nations and churches of Christendom. Render them their due, not as though it were extorted by a too liberal age, or languidly yielded by indifference or vacillation or indolence; but render it as the sacred offering of Christian justice and the express command of Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.

3. 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' May we not extend the words yet further, to express the evangelical principle implied in other parts of the Gospels? Render to fact, to truth, to reason those things which fact and truth and reason, by an imperial sway, more certainly acknowledged than that of Cæsar, require at our hands. Render to art, to nature, to science, the conclusions which they have fairly won; render to them the honours with which God has invested them by planting on their front that image and superscription of Himself which none can see and doubt. Render this too again, not grudgingly or of necessity, but as remembering that here also God loveth the cheerful giver. Whenever we can lay our finger or plant our foot on an acknowledged fact, in nature, or in language, or in history, cling to it, cherish it, honour it as a fragment of the truth on which we all repose. It may be small and homely in itself as the silver penny of Cæsar's tribute; it may seem contrary, as that did, to all preconceived opinions; but nevertheless, if it be a fact stand by it, not in the name only of science or philosophy, but in the name of God, and in the name of Christ, stand by it, without fear or wavering, well assured that thereby we are doing, not dishonour but honour to the Master 'who, we know, is true, and who teaches the way of God in truth, and who regards not the person of man.'

4. And not in speculation only, but in practice, have fact and reason an imperial demand on our religious obedience. Render to prudence, to wisdom, to common sense their due. How many of our controversies need for their remedy, not theological learning, not ancient precedents, not popular agitation, not sounding watchwords, but a few grains of common prudence, a single spark of good sense

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and discretion. Oh, let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that common sense is more than a mere worldly virtue. It is a Christian, nay (with all reverence be it spoken), a truly Christ-like grace. See how it was practised by Him on this occasion. Remember that it is the very characteristic of His answer, that it took the plain, homely, straightforward view of an intricate and difficult case. He who, amidst all other names, is called 'Wisdom,' 'the Eternal Wisdom of God,' did not disdain, nor should we, His scholars, His disciples, disdain, to be wise in that simple wisdom described in the Book of Proverbs, whence the name was given to Him, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, 'to give to the young man knowledge and discretion.'

A. P. STANLEY.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Christian Walk.

Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

I.  UR conversation is in heaven. Conversation properly means citizenship. We are free of the City of God, the New Jerusalem, and we must assert our freedom whenever we are tempted to commit sin. Not only must we say with Joseph, 'How can I do this wickedness?' but, how can I go counter to my privilege as free of the City of God? I must lay hold on the promise, 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,' and if so I shall find the truth of another promise, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'

II. 'From whence also we look for the Saviour.' He is to be expected at any time, and when He comes it will be for the complete and eternal deliverance of all the scattered citizens of the City of God, for He will change their vile bodies, the bodies of their vileness, in which bodies have dwelt their corrupt lusts, so that in their renewed bodies sin shall be impossible, for they shall be renewed in the likeness of His glorious Body.

III. 'According to the working whereby He is able to subdue.' Of all the operations of God that is the most mysterious, by which He endues matter with the properties of spirit. The plenitude of God's

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power was exerted in the Lord's sepulchre, so that that which was buried a natural body rose again as a spiritual one. This is the power of His Resurrection. 'The right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.'

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Citizen's Twofold Stewardship.

Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. S. MATTHEW xxii. 21.

I.  T is important that we do not misunderstand those words in which, in the text, Christ Himself defines a citizen's responsibilities: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' It has not been uncommon to understand this language as if it defined two separate obligations which were in contrast if not in antagonism to one another.

The words have been read as if Christ had said: 'Here are certain duties which you owe to Cæsar, or to the state. God has nothing to do with those duties (as if God could have nothing to do with any duty!), but you are to render them because you live in a certain land and under a certain rule. And here, again, are certain duties which you owe to God. Cæsar, or the state, has nothing to do with those duties (as though a state could hope enduringly to prosper and ignore God!), but you are to render them because you hold a certain religious belief. Now the important thing is that these two duties should be kept distinct, and you must draw a sharp line round each one of them and take care that neither of them becomes confounded with the other.' Rome says to the state, 'Let me alone. It is mine to define morals and duty, and whether my definitions threaten the good order of society and the spread of intelligence and education among the common people or no, you must not interfere.' And on the other hand, the modern pagan, who has outgrown God and His law and His gospel, says to the Church, 'Let me alone. It is mine to decide what are the duty and obligation of the citizen, whether I seem to you in doing so to threaten the very foundations of all moral distinctions and social order, or not.' This had been the controversy which has raged between Cæsarism and Ecclesiasticism through all

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the Christian centuries, and unlike a great many other controversies, it has raged, not because both sides were right, but because both sides were wrong.

II. More than he is the subject or citizen of any state, is man a citizen and subject of the kingdom of God. And therefore, first of all he is to bring his life under the influence and government of those highest sanctions which come from God. He is to render unto God the things that are God's; and, since all things are God's, he is to consecrate himself and his gifts, first of all, to that highest service, and then, in the spirit of that consecration, he is to do his duty to the community and the state.

His duty. But what is a citizen's duty, as implied in the teaching and spirit of the religion of the New Testament? I may not undertake to define it in detail, but plainly it is in his dealings with his fellow-citizens, with the commonwealth, and with the nation, to illustrate that peculiar spirit which is the distinctive characteristic of Christ and His religion. That characteristic is not its courage in rebuking wrong, nor its justice in dealing with sin, nor its explicitness in defining the divine authority of the personal conscience and moral truth, through all these are in it; but in one word, in its unselfishness. Looking back over the ministry of Christ and His Apostles this is the one principle that interprets the whole. These men and their Divine Leader were burning and throbbing with what the author of *Ecce Homo* has called the enthusiasm of humanity. They saw in their fellows not the actual but the ideal man. They saw in the meanest and guiltiest wretch that lived possibilities of the divinest graces that human character can illustrate. And when they went out from the presence of their Master they went with the determination to make the world better and nobler and happier by what they should do for it. We have a phrase by which we describe one who, in any community, is not so entirely engrossed with his own affairs but that he has some time for the happiness and well-being and advancement of his neighbours, of his city, of his land. We call such a man a public-spirited citizen. The early disciples of the religion of Christ were the most public-spirited citizens whom the world has known.

H. C. POTTER.

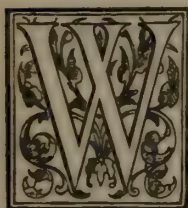
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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Mercy of God.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

HOSEA xiv. 1.



WHILE the freeness of God's mercy is the leading idea suggested by these words, it is not the only one; on the contrary, the condition of our nature is accurately expressed, as is the mode by which alone it can be ameliorated.

I. Consider, first, the state into which man has brought himself. There are few things more important, whether we view mankind collectively or individually, than the fastening on the sinner all the blame of his sin. God may invite the prodigal to return, but God has nothing to do with his wandering away into the desert. Thou hast not fallen through an inherent inability to stand; He has so constituted thee that thou mightest have stood. Thou hast not fallen through the ground being slippery, and thick-set with snares; He placed thee where thy footing was firm, and thy pathway direct. Upon man himself come home wholly all the effects of the fall. In whatever degree there may be a necessity of sinning, in no degree is there a necessity of perishing. God places no man in such a moral condition that his falling into perdition is unavoidable. Let a man have once heard of Christ, and from that moment forward salvation is within arm's-length of this man. Is he willing to be saved? Then he may be saved. Is he unwilling to be saved? Then, at least, he perishes by his own choice; and our righteous, and merciful, and redeeming God is clear in judgment when He leaves the obdurate one to the fruit of his own folly.

II. Observe the mode of deliverance, as it may be gathered from the invitation: 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God.'

1. The fall did not do away with God's claim on man. Man could not cease to belong to God as a creature, when man had given himself to Satan; and this important fact is assumed, if not asserted, in the words of our text. The party addressed is the fallen, but the party addressing is still the Lord his God. Disobedience has removed man from the centre to the outskirts of the universe, but in one great sense it could not remove him from God, 'who is that infinite sphere,'

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as expressed by an old writer, 'whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere.'

2. We gather an inference of consolation from the fact that thou, 'Israel hast fallen by thine iniquity.' There is the groundwork of hope, that God will yet look mercifully upon us and restore us, seeing that, notwithstanding alienation, He is still our God. The message, 'Return unto the Lord thy God,' is full of consolation, because it invites us to the Being from whom all our rebellion has not been able to divide us.

3. That which God invites us to do must be possible for us to do. If God calls on us to return we are not at liberty to question that there lies no impossibility against our returning. Now this assumes two things:

a. That God has removed all existing obstacles.

b. That He bestows all requisite assistance in the performance of it.

H. MELVILL.

How to Return to God.

HOSEA xiv. 1, 2.

I. **T**HE first act of the awakened soul is usually an act of prayer, and it is most natural, and indeed most proper, that it should be so. The very act of expressing our need has a tendency both to bring about clearer views of what it is that we need, and to intensify our desire. Inward silence and reserve tend to benumb the faculties and to check the rising desire of the soul, when the outpouring of earnest supplication seems to stir us to our inmost depths.

II. Notice the urgency of this utterance, which God's love puts as it were in our mouths. There is only one kind of prayer that is at all appropriate in the lips of an awakened sinner, who finds himself without God in the world, but who desires to arise and go to His Father: and that is the urgent, specific entreaty for present forgiveness and salvation.

III. The divinely suggested utterance of our text is not only an urgent prayer, but it is also the expression of a distinct change in our moral attitude towards God. It marks the end of the life of aversion from God, and the beginning of a true conversion to God.

IV. When thus with all our hearts we truly seek Him, it will not be long before we become aware of something that seems at first to rise like a barrier between Him and us, shutting us off from all contact with Him. What about our sins? This experience is evidently foreseen in our text, where we have a most definite and specific

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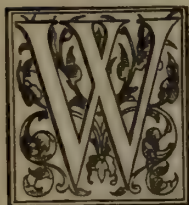
request for an immediate and most necessary benefit. There stands the barrier, and nothing can be done until it is removed; and so the Father's love bids us pray, 'Take away all iniquity.'

W. HAY AITKEN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Christian's Race.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. PHILIPPIANS iii. 15.



WHAT are we to understand by thus minded? At an evening party in Cambridge, some fifty years ago, the Rev. Charles Simeon, giving a family exposition, took for his subject this very verse. And when he had asked what is implied by the expression 'thus minded,' he himself gave answer, and in his usual methodical treatment of Scripture, said, 'It means three things. It means, Let there be no lofty notions, no worldly objects, and no listless habits.'

I. No lofty notions. If it were allowed to any one of the children of men to have lofty notions of their own performances and attainments, that liberty would have been granted to S. Paul. This he shows in his endeavour to convince those who were pharisaically trusting in their own righteousness. There are some persons now, as there were in the times of the Apostle, who think salvation is to be had by the works they have wrought. That idea, after his conversion, S. Paul scorned. No one had a greater claim, so to speak, than he had, as to outward ceremonies. He was canonically circumcised, according to the law and the custom, on the eighth day after his birth. He was of the nation of Israel, and could trace back his genealogy to Jacob and Abraham. He belonged to the privileged tribe of Benjamin, which was descended from Rachel, the wife of Jacob's choice. By both parents he was of Jewish extraction, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a Pharisee, and not only so, but he belonged to the strictest and most punctilious sect of the Pharisees. He had been most zealous in opposing the Christians, who, as he thought, were intent upon destroying Moses and the Prophets. In his earnestness for the law he had ever persecuted the Church of Christ. And then as regards the righteousness which was to be ob-

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tained by legal observances, he was blameless. No one could charge him with any neglect or omission. If, therefore, he argues, any one could enter heaven by his works, he was that person.

But, after his conversion, what were his feelings upon that subject? His lofty notions were gone. Those things, which he before had counted as gain, as so much money, as so much merit, laid up to his account in heaven, he now counted to be loss, an actual hindrance; yea, he nauseated them as dung, because now he expected heaven through Christ, through Christ's Blood and righteousness alone, and not for any works or worthiness of his own.

We must acknowledge that our piety is very stunted and dwarfish compared with what it ought to be. We are but babes, when we ought to be young men and fathers. We are living upon milk, when, by the time of our spiritual experience, we ought to be able to take strong meat. Our deep humiliation ought therefore to be crying, 'We are but unprofitable servants. Woe unto us, the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. Our leanness, our leanness! We have not yet apprehended that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Certainly in us there must be no lofty notions. Again. There must be in us, as in S. Paul—

II. No worldly objects. S. Paul's former position had been one of great influence. He had sat, as a pupil, at the feet of the noted Jewish doctor, Gamaliel. He had profited, or made progress, in the knowledge of the Jews' religion beyond most of his equals in age. He was a man of extensive reading and of classical scholarship. He, therefore, might have secured preferment, or might have made a figure in the literary world, and commanded admiration for his talents and acquirements, had he pleased.

But he did not please. After his conversion his aim was single. That aim was to serve God in the gospel of His dear Son. This was the only thing for which he lived. His desire was to be found in Christ Himself, not clothed in his own righteousness, but clad in the spotless righteousness of Christ, that wedding garment which is unto all and upon all that believe. His desire was also to bring others to the same blessed Redeemer, and thus to add daily to the number of those who should be saved. He had no worldly objects. Rather than be a burden to the converts at Corinth, who were either unable or unwilling to contribute to his support, he cheerfully, as a tentmaker, worked with his own hands. As an Apostle of Christ, he could have demanded suitable maintenance; but he forbore this just right, that the gospel might in no wise be hindered. Like Moses, and like Samuel, he might ask, 'Whose ox or whose ass have I taken?' He had coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; but he had made it

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evident that the whole desire of his heart was to spend and be spent in behalf of that divine Redeemer who had bought him with His Blood. S. Paul had no worldly objects.

How different, alas, is this from the spirit of some who make a profession of religion! Too many have worldly objects. They wish to stand well either with their ministers or with the godly. Or they think their temporal interests will be promoted by joining the Lord's people, mistaking gain for godliness. I hope neither the love of praise, nor the love of money and of advance in life, explains why you take up the lamp of a Christian profession. Let no such worldly objects rule over you; but rather let this be more and more your ambition, to live to the glory of Him who lived and died for you. Are you pious masters? Act as servants of Christ. Are you pious servants? Remember that while you are serving your earthly master, you are really and truly serving not him, but Christ. Yes, this principle of doing everything, whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to the glory of God, will ennoble even the lowest and meanest occupation. God is glorified by the bright shining of the sun. God is equally glorified by the feeble glimmer of the glow-worm. Both shine at the sovereign command of the same Creator, and both answer exactly the purposes for which they were brought into being. While the unconverted sinner always has some worldly project in view, and never rises above the level of self, let it be yours in everything to rise up to Christ. Let there be no worldly objects. But, thirdly, if we would be like-minded with S. Paul, I would add, there must be in us—

III. No listless habits. There are some professed Christians who, by their slothful and negligent walk, lead us to fear that, whatever they may say to the contrary, they have never yet begun to seek the Lord at all. The real Christian is in earnest. What did the Apostle say of his own activity and devotedness of purpose? He compares himself to a racer in the Corinthian games. There would be no listless habits in a man running a race. He would keep his eye fixed upon the goal. He would think nothing of the ground he had already passed over. His only anxiety would be to get through as rapidly as possible the distance which still remained between him and the prize. This, S. Paul tells us, should be the line of conduct pursued by every one of us who is seeking eternal life in heaven.

This, he says, was his own manner of living. He had been called by God in Christ Jesus. He had entered the lists in the Christian race. He was now actually contending for the glorious prize held out to the competitors. 'I forget,' he exclaims, 'the things that are behind. I press forward unto those things that are before. I am straining every nerve. I hasten toward the mark for the prize. I keep my thoughts fixed on the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

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And I desire nothing but to finish my course with joy. Nor is this to be the course of action of me only. All must run this same race. And, therefore, let all of us, as many as be perfect and decided Christians, be thus minded. Let us so run. Let there be no listless habits.'

C. CLAYTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Christ's Example. His whole life is our rule ; not His miraculous works, His footsteps walking on the sea, and such like, they are not for our following, but His obedience, holiness, meekness, and humility are our copy which we should continually study. This matchless example is the happiest way of teaching. 'He that follows Me,' says He, 'shall not walk in darkness.' He that aims high, shoots the higher for it, though he shoot not so high as he aims. This is that which ennobles the spirit of a Christian, the propounding of this our high pattern, the example of Jesus Christ.

Good Example. Good example is a language and an argument which everybody understands.

Example and Precept. THE offspring of the teacher is rooted out when he who is born by the word is killed by the example.
JOB xxxi. 8.

Priest's Example. THE minister's life is the people's looking-glass, by which they usually dress themselves.

Earthliness. How often Holy Scripture bids us to lift up our eyes, because we are of our own nature so apt to forget our country and our home and to fix them on the place of our exile.
PHIL. iii. 17-20.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	COLOSSIANS I. 3-12.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW IX. 18-26.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	AMOS III.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	AMOS V OR IX.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

God's Promise.

Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence. PSALM XXXI. 20.



AND who are they, of whom the prophet speaketh? Is it a favoured few, a selected and exempted remnant, whom the care of the Eternal shall insulate from the open world, and remove into the silence of the forests or the hills, to contemplate and to adore? Is the secret, the covert, some curtained or cloistered circle, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where there is leisure to be good? Is it a home with God beyond the grave, in the land far off, where the righteous enters into the peace and light of immortality, resting upon his bed? Is the promise restricted to priests and seers here, or to the just made perfect yonder? No, it is not so. The last preceding words tell us otherwise. The 'they' of this golden oracle are all those who fear Him, all those who trust in Him. The humblest spiritual loyalist to God, the weakest, and the weariest, and the busiest, who hides himself in Him, who commits the way to Him, who commends the spirit to Him; this hidden life, this secret of the Presence, it is for even him.

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And it is for him (we read again in the preceding sentence) as fearing thus, and as trusting thus, before the sons of men. It is for those who avow the Lord as their King, and venture upon His promises, before the sons of men. In the thick of human intercourse, amidst the shock and conflicts of human change, under the hot glare of human observation, out of doors amidst the dissonance of the common day, it is there that this wonderful promise of the Holy Ghost by the Psalmist is to take effect. For so it runs: 'Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee, before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence.'

Such is the scope of the promise; 'for them that fear Thee, them that trust in Thee.' Such is the place of the promise; 'before the sons of men.'

Surrender to Jesus Christ is not a thing reserved for exciting occasions, and artificial conditions. It is for the Christian man to-day, under the environment of this time present, in our own generation, be its obstacles and its problems what they may, so long as they are not of our choosing, but of the will of God. And now I point you again to that familiar field. I invite you out as it were from among the sons of men. And I say, as we survey that scene of realities and of trial, that there, even there, is the intended place not only for a genuine recognition of the rights of Jesus Christ, but for a profound enjoyment of His presence. That bright secret is no curiosity for a spiritual museum. It lives and moves. It is made for use. It is revealed, it is offered, it is given, to be worn and wielded amidst the wear and tear of all that is present, of all that is practical, around us as we are.

Surrender and the presence, the Lord's entire ownership and our invitation to live concealed in the secret of His presence, these both, according to God in His Word, are things altogether meant to work and reign in real life. Nor is this the only tie between these two spiritual facts. They not only walk the same path, but they are locked there by strong embraces into one. They are, I may say, only two poles of one spiritual sphere. Surrender is the negative thing where the presence is the positive. Surrender is the man's turning from himself to his Redeemer, dropping in the act the base plunder of self-love, and stretching out arms capacious, because empty, towards Him. The presence is the Redeemer's meeting the man with the fulness of Himself, with the gift of nothing less than Himself to the creature who brings nothing but necessities and submission. So the two spiritual facts by their own nature eternally complement each other. We have all often confessed this, ay and

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ourselves claimed to act upon it, as we have knelt believing and receiving at the Table of the Feast of Christ. 'Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies; humbly beseeching Thee that all we may be fulfilled with Thy grace.'

That glorious complex, surrender and the presence, is the liberty of the life of grace, and its inviolable peace, and ever-springing power. In that supreme paradox, the gospel, these sacred paradoxes have their vital place. An absolute submission is the secret of a perfect freedom. A supernatural peace, an inward dwelling in the divine covert, is the secret of a life wonderfully enabled for holy energy and action along the daily path.

But now to look direct upon this latter; this hiding in the secret of His presence before the sons of men.

This promise is akin to a whole host of promises. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee;' 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;' 'He leadeth me beside the waters of repose;' 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts;' 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; in Me ye shall have peace;' 'Come unto Me all ye that labour, and I will rest you; ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

I. Here first observe the paradox of such words, then their promise. The paradox is, as I have said, that the Christian life is on the one hand meant to know no rest nor holiday from obedience to the law of duty, from hourly serving our generation in the will of God; yet, on the other hand, at the very heart of this life there is always to be this mysterious stillness, this secret place of peace. Not from an inner tumult of wrestling energies is to come that life's true power, but from this hidden calm. The unfatigued willingness to suffer, to sacrifice, to labour, to sympathise, to bestow, is to leap continually from a spring in itself as silent as it is profound. A life all activity (or perhaps all suffering) at the circumference, and revolving amidst the tangled things of the common hour, is yet to move upon a central point of rest,

'With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On the soft axle.'

The world, the flesh, the tempter, all will be present, formidable parts of the Christian's circumstances; but, 'Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence.' Thronging duties may press him hard; but, Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence. Sufferings of body, anguish of spirit, may strike upon the life. And grace is no anæsthetic; the Christian is no Stoic; he is follower and member of the Lord of Bethany, and of Gethsemane; he feels,

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he grieves, indeed; yet, 'Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence.' Or look another way altogether. Take life in its most vivid, its most pleasing interests and occupations. So these things lie for the man in the line of the will of God, and so the man fears Him, and trusts Him, before the sons of men, the paradox of grace is that in these things also 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence.'

It is indeed an enigma, as is almost every other great fact of the religion of the Bible. But none the less it is, it is indeed a promise. 'Thou shalt hide them: 'I will give thee rest; 'Ye shall find rest unto your souls; 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts.'

Those last sacred words, remember, are a promise. We are accustomed to hear them in another and indeed a soul-moving form. As the hour of worship closes, as the communicants prepare to leave the precincts of the Table, when

'The feast, though not the love, is past and gone,'

then the pastor lets the flock go with the invocation upon them of the peace of God. It is an invocation rich in significance and power. But do not forget that its divine original, in the Philippian Epistle, is not an invocation but a precise and positive promise. True, it is a promise under conditions; above all under the condition that 'in everything we make known our requests to God.' But that granted, then there follows nothing less than this certainty and guarantee, 'The peace of God shall keep your hearts.' Need I count it out of place and time here to point to that strong future tense, that wonderful 'shall,' and ask myself, and ask my brethren, if we have proved it true? I will ask the question, I will humbly press it on the soul. Here is the voice of God, the warrant of God: have we made our claim under it, and found it to mean what it says? Ah, many, well I know, have so done and have so found. For myself, so far as a sinful man may venture personally to affirm, I know enough to dare to say the ground is good, if a man use it lawfully. There is a peace of God, able indeed to keep, to safeguard, the weakest and the most treacherous heart. There is a presence that makes at life's centre a stillness, pregnant with positive and active blessing. There is a fulfilling that can counterwork the fulness of the thronging hours, and enable men in the stress of real life to live behind it all with Jesus Christ, while they are all the while alert and attentive for the next call of duty, and the next. The Christian is indeed to be ever seeking, ever aspiring upward, not as though he had already attained. He is to avoid as his most deadly poison that subtle spiritual Pharisaism which plumes itself upon a supposed advanced experience,

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and presumes to compare itself with others, and hesitates, if but for a moment, to prostrate itself in confession and penitence before the awful, the blessed holiness of God. But none the less the Christian is called to a great rest as well as to a great aspiration. He is called to a great thanksgiving as well as to a deep confession. He is called, he is commanded, to an entrance into the peace of God. It is not to be the habit of his soul to say, or to sing, that he should be happy if he could cast his care on his Redeemer, and sink in His Almighty arms. It is to be his, on the ground of all the promises, to do it; and to be at rest in God.

Conditions there are indeed to that great peace; so we have remembered. But they are conditions each of them in its nature a heavenly blessing. There is the condition of godly fear. There is the condition of humble trust. There is the condition of trusting thus before the sons of men; let not that be forgotten. There is the condition of coming direct to Jesus Christ, to take the yoke of His word and will. There is the condition of looking unto Him. There is the condition of watching and of prayer. But are these things a complicated and grievous burthen, a bundle of arbitrary exactions? They are only so many forms of that one great condition to our finding what is laid up for us in our Lord; the condition of coming into directest contact with Himself, and there abiding. Such contact, in God's own order, liberates unto the believing suppliant the virtues of Jesus Christ. Not peace only, but His peace is given.

It is a wonderful thing to be permitted to watch a life which you have reason to know is hid in the secret of the presence of the Lord. Some few years ago I met a good man, humble and gentle, a missionary to Eastern Africa. He abode in the presence, I could not but see it. I heard him tell, with the eloquence of entire simplicity, how in the tropical wilderness, in the deep night, he had waited for and shot the raging lion which had long been the unresisted terror of a village clan. It could not be the will of God, he reasoned, that this beast should lord it over men; and so, as it were in the way of Christian business, he went forth and put it to death. And then I watched that man, a guest in my own house, under the very different test of the inconvenience of disappointed plans; and the secret of the presence was as surely with him then as when he had lain quietly down to sleep in his tent on the lonely field, to be roused only by the sound of the lion's paw, as it rent the earth at the open door.

I have marked the secret of the presence as it ruled and triumphed in young lives around me here. I recall a conversation on the subject. It was with a friend and student of my own, a loving Christian, but also an ardent and most vigorous athlete. Could the peace of God keep him, he wondered and inquired, when the strong temper was

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ready to take fire in the rush and struggle of the game? And the answer came in a quite thankful word three days later: 'Yes, I asked Him; I trusted Him; and He kept me altogether.'

I have watched lives in which the secret of the presence has been drawn around mental studies and competitions. It has made the man care for his subject not less but more. It has made him not less but more intent to do well, to do better, to do best; αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων. But it has taken the poison out of competition, by bringing into it Jesus Christ. And so has come the honest aim to win knowledge and to train faculty for Him, and to lay up just such prestige as might perchance subserve His ends in His disciple's life. And equally and at the same time it has prepared the man's spirit for the blessed bitterness of disappointment.

III. The secret of the presence can assert itself in our times, as of old, in the awful hours of life. It can give now as long ago to the suffering confessor those *divinæ martyrum consolationes* which a prisoner of the Reformation found, with astonished joy, filling not another's soul but his own in the grim dungeon. A few years ago, in a mountain town, in the province of Fuh-kien in China, two men, recent converts to the Lord, were beset by a furious mob, and hung up each to a tree, to be beaten there to death. The elder, a sturdy peasant, who had often pleaded with his neighbours even to tears for Christ, fearing for the firmness of his younger friend, called out to him, 'Do not forget Him who died for us; do not deny Him.' 'But indeed,' said the other, as he very simply told the story soon after to his friend and mine, the Rev. Robert Stewart, 'indeed he needed not to say it. The Holy Ghost so filled me that I felt no fear or trouble.' Rescue, by a detachment of Chinese soldiery, came just in time; not too soon to have allowed the confessors fully to prove, not the bitterness of death, but the glorious secret of the presence.

Now God be thanked for conspicuous spiritual miracles such as this, and such as that great martyr-triumph just five years ago in inner Africa, by the shore of the Victoria Lake, when those young saints of God ascended their fiery chariot, singing with loud voices the praises of their Saviour upon their own red funeral pile. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, even in such straits as these; the secret of His presence is as powerful now as when it worked open miracle in the Chaldean furnace. But it is often well to turn from the swelling thoughts suggested by the exceptional and the heroic in the records of the gospel, to the sober questions of the uneventful lifetime, and the common scene, and the transfiguring power of the blessed secret there. And as I do so, a name, a face, a presence rises on my soul. I see one whose life for long, long years I watched indeed with microscopic nearness. I see a Christian woman, sur-

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rendered at all hours to the never-ceasing doing of the nearest and least romantic duty; open on every side to every appeal for aid, for toil, for love; the summer sunshine of the full and busy home; the friend of every needing, every sinning life, in the wide, poor parish; experienced indeed in the pure joys which come to hearts that forget themselves, but called again and again to agonies of sorrow. And I see this life, in its radiant but unconscious beauty, at once, and equally, and with a living harmony, practical down to the smallest details, and filled with God; open to every whisper, to every touch, that said 'I want you,' and hidden, deep hidden, morning, noon, and night, in the secret of the presence. That life was a long miracle, 'and long the track of light it left behind it,' to the praise of His grace who shone out from its blessed depths. Let me give Him thanks for it indeed. It is not past, it is not lost; only hidden a little deeper than before with Christ in God, where

'Yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven, without restraint.'

In Christ, a son needs not to say, *Mater, ave atque vale*. The secret of the presence includes both worlds, and folds them into one.

As we draw our meditation towards its close, I revert to the precise wording of my text. 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence,' *b'sether paneyka*, 'in the covert of Thy countenance.' It is a glorious stroke of the divine poetry; the covert, the secret, of His countenance. We find kindred phrases elsewhere in the precious Psalter; the shelter of the brooding wings of the Eternal, the abode in His mighty shadow. But this phrase stands out a peculiar treasure, 'the secret of Thy countenance.' There is no shadow here; it is 'a privacy of glorious light.' And what a light! It is light that lives. It is a photosphere within which opens upon the happy inmate the sweetness and the response of a personal while eternal smile. It is not It but He. It is not a sanctuary but a Saviour, and a Father seen full in Him, giving to the soul nothing less than Himself indeed in vivid intercourse. It is the Lord, according to that dear promise of the Paschal evening, coming to manifest Himself, and to make His abode with the man, and to dwell in him, and he in Him. It means the spirit's sight of Him that is invisible. It means a life lived not in Christianity but in Christ, who is our life.

And thus the word takes us, out in the open, out before the sons of men, and amidst the strife of tongues, to the deep central glory of the gospel, that it may be ours in humble, wondering possession. The gospel, the *εὐαγγέλιον*, what is it? Subordinately, it is many things. It is the revelation of the redemption of our nature, by the work of the Incarnate Son wrought once and for ever for us. It is the

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message of the unutterable mercy of that pardon which moved the prophet's awe-stricken wonder, 'Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?' It is the message of the bringing of the guilty, in penitent faith, into the sublime amnesty of the Holy One, because of His own gift of His own begotten, who died, the just for the unjust, the propitiation of our sins. It is the message of the more than restoration of our fallen nature in our second head. It is the bringing out of life and immortality from shadows into the light. It is the revelation of wonderful possibilities of benefit and blessing for this life present, in even its temporary aspects, ever since it has been possible to say of all men, yea, of the lowest and the worst of human persons, or human tribes, 'for whom Christ died.' But the inmost glory of the gospel, the mysterious central brightness of its message, what is it? It is the giving by God of Himself to man. It is man's union, and then communion, with none other than God in Christ. For this was prophecy and preparation; patriarchs, and priests, and kings. For this was Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Golgotha, and Joseph's garden, and the hill of the Ascension, and the fiery shower of Pentecost. For this was righteousness imputed, and holiness imparted, and the immortal redemption of our body revealed. Here, and no lower, from our point of sight, lies the final cause of all the saving process. It was in order that God, with infinite rightness, and with all the willingness of eternal love, might give Himself to man, and dwell in man, and walk in him, and shine out from him, in measure here, hereafter perfectly.

So we will come and take; for He stands in act to give. So it shall be ours to say, in the sweet English of a Hindoo Christian poetess,

'In the Secret of His Presence how my soul delights to hide,
Ah, how hallowed are the lessons that I learn at Jesus' side.'

We are invited, here and now, in Jesus Christ, into the secret of the countenance of God. To enter there in the blessed Name is not presumption; it is submission. And the result, the practice—what will it be? The humblest walk of duty; the simplest and least ostentatious, but most genuine, denial of the life of self; the daily uptaking of the unpretentious cross; something always to do, or to be, for others and for the Lord; while in it, and over it, and behind it all, rules a peace which does in sober fact pass understanding, keeping heart and thought; the safeguard of the secret of the countenance of our King.

H. C. G. MOULE.

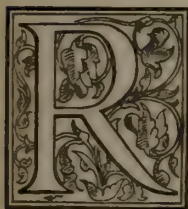
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II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

The Standard of Effort.

We . . . do not cease to desire . . . that ye might walk worthy of the Lord.

COLOSSIANS i. 10.



RELIGION has many aspects. Its atmosphere varies. Its colour changes. It falls in, in many ways, with the moods of nature, and with the moods of man. Sometimes it appears to us all sunshine, sometimes little else than cloud. But indeed—like human life, of which it is the only real philosophy—the dusk and the sunshine are intermingled, and in it, if there is a breadth of untroubled heaven, there

is sure to follow the shadow of the clouds.

Besides, then, the definite and exact teachings which come from the Catholic faith at special times, in Advent or in Lent or Eastertide—now the mind is turned to wider views and the more general aspect of our religion; and if we dwell, in the main, on some one aspect, if we examine it for the moment from some one point of view, we shall not be disloyal to the spirit of the Church, and, with God's blessing, we shall not be wasting our time.

I. There are before man two solemn certainties—life and death. On death, in spite of all its unapproachable seriousness and its unrelenting rigour, we may exercise an influence, but this can be done only through our dealings with life. As we live, so, on the whole, we shall die. To die well we must live well. It is on the conduct of life that the character of death will depend.

To think deeply and carefully how best to deal with life, is, then, of the last importance. It may be looked at from many points of view; it may be illuminated by different lights; it may be realised in its importance under many figures. There is one often before the religious mind which may help us to think worthily of our duty. Life is a journey.

II. Time goes on, year follows year, and in each, man has a sense that there is a fresh turn in his path, a new reach of road. But further upon that road are gathered vast funds of accumulated experience. That road may, we feel, be travelled wisely and well, or many turns may be taken and precious opportunities may be wasted, and though errors may be, in a measure, corrected, yet the sad thing is that never entirely can we retrace our steps. The journey must go on, but the character of our advance depends upon ourselves. It is

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natural, then, and right that the great Apostle, with the real yearnings of a father's heart, should pray that the conduct of life should not be careless; that the onward march should not be haphazard; that the journey, in fact, should not be at random; that there should be effort, honest, unflagging; that there should be a standard by which effort should be measured; that 'the walk' should be 'worthy of the Lord.'

III. Ah! indeed we are travellers, each of us, advancing on a mysterious journey, a journey which each of us can travel once and no more. Doubtless it has been before now, doubtless it will be again, full of startling turns and unexpected vicissitudes. Some who were our companions have parted from us, separated by circumstance, by opinion, by misconception, by distance, by death, but the soul is advancing still on its lonely path of added experience, with chequered lights and darkness, of sorrow or of hope. Still we are here, each of us, with our personal progress to be made, with our special opportunities, with our individual trials. With gifts to use and sins to conquer, with graces to store in the soul's recesses and virtues to make our own in the efforts of duty, with joys to rejoice in, with self-denial to practise, with others to succour and others to love, our journey is going onward in this strange scene of our probation, and before us, coming nearer, 'the valley of the shadow.'

We once heard of the changing world, and its pathos to us was poetry, and its story a touching tale. Now we know it. It has touched ourselves. We are really on a journey, and the afternoon is deepening and the shadows of the evening beginning to lengthen, and we are conscious, all too severely, of the nearness of the night. How shall we meet it? How shall we deal with the burden of past experiences, and look with strength and courage into the unknown possibilities of the future? In what temper shall we stand against the seductions of sadness and the spectral phantoms of doubt? Shall we submit with a fatalistic Kismet, and bear the inevitable as best we may? Shall we gaze with petulance, or arrogance, or vexation on the river around us, or on the river within? Shall we be cynics and scornful, when life shows itself so full of sorrow, so rich in mistake and trouble, in disaster, in degeneracy, in decay? No, surely! Life's journey has a guiding principle. Triumphant faith grows clearer and more buoyant to those who by that light are guiding their journey.

'Grow old along with me !

The best is yet to be—

The last of life, for which the first was made :

Our times are in His hand

Who saith, "A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; trust God : see all, nor be afraid."

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Faith grows clearer to those who seek Him as the journey goes on. It is faith which gives vigour and nobility to effort, because it keeps before the soul the great things yet to be. It encourages to the effort to realise the passing character of all that is, in its present condition, but the everlasting character of all that is godlike and heavenly—of duty nobly done, of sorrow bravely borne, of work energetically carried out, of self-seeking crushed and self-sacrifice endured, and gentleness, and courage, and penitence, and peace, and self-denying love.

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Raising of Jairus's Daughter.

S. MATTHEW ix. 18, 19, 23-26.

I.  HE miracles of raising from the dead, whereof this is the first, have always been regarded as the mightiest outcoming of the power of Christ; and with justice. They are those, also, at which unbelief is readiest to stumble, standing as they do in more direct contrast than any other to all which our experience has known. The line between health and sickness is not definitely fixed; the two conditions melt one into the other, and the transition from this to that is frequent. In like manner storms alternate with calms; the fiercest tumult of the elements allays itself at last; and Christ's word which stilled the tempest did but anticipate and effect in a moment that what the very conditions of nature must have effected in the end. But between being and the negation of being the opposition is not relative, but absolute; between death and life a gulf lies, which no fact furnished by our experience can help us even in imagination to bridge over. It is nothing wonderful, therefore, that miracles of this class are signs more spoken against than any other among all the mighty works of the Lord.

II. Note the relation in which the three miracles of this transcendent character stand to one another; for they are not exactly the same miracle repeated three times over, but may be contemplated as in an ever-ascending scale of difficulty, each a more marvellous outcoming of the great power of Christ than the preceding. Science itself has arrived at the conjecture that the last echoes of life ring in

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the body much longer than is commonly supposed ; that for a while it is full of the reminiscences of life. This being so, we shall at once recognise in the quickening of him who had been four days dead a still mightier wonder than in the raising of the young man who was borne out to his burial ; and again, in that miracle a mightier out-coming of Christ's power than in the present, wherein life's flame, like some newly extinguished taper, was still more easily rekindled, when thus brought in contact with Him who is the fountain-flame of all life. Immeasurably more stupendous than all these will be the wonder of that hour, when all the dead of old, who will have lain (some of them many thousand years) in the dust of death, shall be summoned from, and shall leave, their graves at the same quickening voice.

R. C. TRENCH.

The Touch of Faith.

She said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.
S. MATTHEW ix. 21.

I. **H**OW many evils sin has brought into the world. The seeds of sin are lying dormant in our souls, and even when brought into God's family, and made His children by adoption and grace, we still unite in the mortifying confession, 'There is no health in us.'

II. Another reflection drawn from the history is, that we are too much disposed to seek human help, instead of going directly to God.

III. However deep-seated and desperate the condition of the soul's nealth, the Saviour can help us.

IV. Note the secrecy with which the afflicted woman sought help of Jesus. 'Nor is her wish for secrecy unbelief, but simply humility—humility, accompanied with such faith in Him that she feels assured that a touch of His raiment will suffice.'

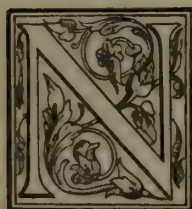
J. N. NORTON.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Seeking Good, and hating Evil.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live : and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good. AMOS v. 14, 15.



NOTHING can exceed the simplicity of these words, and yet they embody, if rightly understood, the whole of religion.

I. Seek good. Seek the highest good in the best way. The highest good is God Himself, who is willing to give Himself even to the sinner. Thus Isaiah : 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.' If God gives to us Himself, He gives us all good for time and for eternity.

But seek the highest good in the best way, and that is in the way of redemption. Seek it through faith in Him whom the Father hath revealed. Seek it in His Name, through His intercession. Plead His merits. Partake of His Sacraments.

II. And not evil. A little further the prophet says : 'Hate the evil, and love the good.' It is no use attempting to seek good unless we hate the evil, for if we are to seek the good, we must love it. And this brings with it all that the Bible, or rather, God in the Bible, says about a change of heart, about the new covenant in which God promises to put His law in the heart, and write it in the mind. Seek, then, the Spirit of God, and by seeking Him you seek the love of God.

M. F. SADLER.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Efficacy of Prayer.

Pray without ceasing. I THESS. V. 17.



PRAYER in history. Let your imagination grasp the vast place which prayer holds in the whole history of our humanity. Man, as you look at him broadly, does set his faculties to move in three directions. He moves out towards nature to draw out its resources for his advantage; and that is civilisation. Its history begins where the savage hunts his prey, or scratches the soil and throws in his grains for the beginning of agriculture. It passes through all that varied history of industry which reaches up to that vast complexity of the modern system of civilisation, by which the resources of the farthest corners of the earth are brought together to the centres where men live, for their convenience and for their luxury. All this activity of prayer, seen in its various strange forms till it reaches up to rational consistency in the prayers of the Son of Man, all this activity of prayer could not have been evoked, could not have developed, could not have subsisted unless man by praying had been really in relation to the God who hears; unless all this activity of prayer had been in real correspondence with the fact, and the most fundamental fact on which the universe is built.

II. God and the individual. Secondly, there is no doubt that a great many people recognise in a vague sort of way that somehow prayer is a real activity of human life. They cannot so far separate themselves from the inner man as to deny that. But to kneel down and pray for this or that seems to postulate a knowledge of God about me, an attention of God to me in particular which, when I consider the vastness of the universe, appears altogether preposterous to suppose.

There are a great many cases in which we need to distinguish between our imagination and our reason. This is one. True it is that the imagination of man falls absolutely baffled before the task of imagining how the conscience of God and the activity of God

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which are over all things absolutely, can still comprise an individual knowledge, and an individual attention directed to every particular atom and part of that great universe. Our imagination, I say, is absolutely baffled. But you know quite well that if you take the elementary facts with which physical science deals, like the existence of ether, on which all modern theories of light and heat are based, or the vastness of the solar system, in the same degree your imagination is absolutely baffled. You may not be able to draw a mental picture of things which still your reason may postulate, may force you to believe. Now let your reason go to work; and you will find that it comes very near to postulating about God just this very thing which you find it so hard to imagine. All human knowledge and action as it advances to perfection both widens in range, while at the same time it becomes more detailed in application. Carry up that thought until you can perceive the perfect consciousness of God, and you will find that it postulates that God's knowledge and action shall be at once over all His creatures whatsoever; but that the universal range and scope of the divine attributes shall diminish not one whit from their particular and personal application, so that God created us, and loves us, and knows us, and deals with us one by one as individually, as particularly, as if there were none other created or none so loved. Prayer is possible as the real request addressed by an individual soul out of its individual needs to the Almighty and Universal Father, because that Fatherhood of God is not wider in its range than it is absolutely particular and individual in its protecting, in its creating, in its predestinating love.

III. Prayer and Providence. Thirdly. But God knows so much better than I do what I want. That prayer, the asking God out of my short-sighted folly to give me this or that, is surely a very ignorant procedure. Had I not better put a general trust in God and go on my way submitting to His providence? That is one of the cases in which a thought can take very devout expression while at the same time it may cut at the root of practical religion. For we all know that this appeal, we need not pray because God knows already what we want, allows even too easily of our going on our way and practically leaving God out of our lives. Our Lord knew well enough that the object of prayer was not to inform God; 'your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask it.' The object of prayer is not to inform God; but it is to train us in habits of personal intercourse with God, of personal sonship towards Him. We are made for sonship, sonship is personal correspondence, personal, intelligent co-operation with God. It is a gradually increasing power of familiarity with God; of intercourse with Him, of approach toward Him as person to person.

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Exactly as truly there are stores of blessings which God intends for you, but which He will not give to you unless you energetically correspond with His law, with His method, by prayer. Prayer is as fruitful a correspondence with the method of God as work, as fruitful and as necessary. Some things you can obtain by work without prayer; some things you can obtain by prayer without other work; some things by the combination of working and praying; but no things at all without your co-operation: and co-operation by prayer has no kind of rational difficulty attendant upon it which does not attend equally upon co-operation by the method of work. You have no kind of right to put the reign of law as an obstacle to prayer unless you are prepared to make the reign of law an obstacle to your doing anything to get your own living.

CANON GORE.

The Religion of Christ not of Man but for Man.

Then said I, Lo, I come in (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God. HEBREWS x. 7.

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me. S. JOHN iv. 34.

IT is so easy to treat religion as a matter of opinion and discussion without putting our conscience and will into living a Christian life, that there is danger of our losing sight of the one deepest and yet most practical question. Opinion is not faith. Views of religion are not religious convictions. Discussions of Christianity are not Christian righteousness. We are to think now of Christ's own answer to the question why He came. The words are spoken to God the Father by the Son: 'I come to do Thy will;' but they are spoken for our sake.

I. Remember, the will was done on the earth and not in heaven, done among men, not angels; among such men as some of those you dealt with last week, and very likely were disgusted with, men not fair but mean, not trusty, not pure or patient or true or generous or reverent; among women whose hearts were not unstained, whose tongues were not charitable, whose temper was not gentle, unwomanly women, not much like those who, Christ said, should be mother and sisters to Him. Among such people, in a vicious, selfish, grasping, dishonest, over-reaching, monopolising, crucifying society, one Man, born of woman, did God's will. And what is wonderful, the next sentence tells us how He did it, or what the doing of it was to Him. 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work.' His meat! To be homeless and friendless, to be misunderstood and hated, to toil all day with the multitude in the market

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places, teaching stupid pupils and healing unthankful lepers, and then to watch and pray all night on the mountain that He might know or do that Father's will more perfectly, this was His meat. It was to Him what eating is to hunger. It fed Him, refreshed Him, the joy of a feast. It satisfied Him. Think of this as your idea of religion. More than that. He saw the future Church rising and spreading in all lands, true worshippers in it, saints loving it and giving money and labour to spread it; missionaries sailing and travelling for Him; martyrs holding their hands in the fire, and singing in prisons for Him; the Cross shining on the shores of far-off islands and in the deserts of dark continents; pagan wildernesses turned into the fruitful fields and wedlock-guarded homes of a peaceful industry, hospitals, orphan houses, asylums, shelters, sons and daughters of God running, waiting, denying themselves, helping neighbours, in His name—all this He saw coming after Him. This was the meat that satisfied Him, 'content to do that will.' It appears more and more what religion was to Him.

II Then one of His Apostles brings this reality over from the Master to His followers and hands it down from Christ to us. For you and me, in some practical way and in some glorious measure, it is possible to be doing the will of God. He puts it in the form of a benediction, and thousands of ministers say it over in churches to departing congregations hurrying away and scarcely thinking what the blessing is. 'Now may He who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ make you perfect in every good work, to do His will.' Notice, the last four words tell us what good work or perfect work is. Whether your daily occupation shall be good or bad depends on something within it, out of sight, not got as a handicraft or a profession or a lesson or a fortune is got; what we call the spirit of it, a fine, invisible quality, finer than the air, which runs through it all. The work itself is one thing, the spirit of the work is another. We live in two worlds at once—another besides this one which yields us what we eat and wear and earn and spend and lay up. Even the earth and sky, in one of our rare bright days, have more in them than what we see, and we know it in another way. The glory is not in the chemistry of the soil, the compound of the atmosphere, the anatomy of the hills, the vegetable substances. You cannot analyse it with any of your crucibles—the uplift of the morning, the mystery of the moonlight, the majesty of the mountain top. And as we are not materialists we may as well acknowledge that there is such a thing as spiritual beauty. No sunrise sheds over the lands or pours into our eyes all the light in which we walk and work. And so of the work itself. Put aside all the outward results. They will be put aside presently. They will go from you or you from them, fugitive posses-

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sions, your life itself fugitive. What makes your life good work, strong work, lasting work, more and more perfect work? Hear the answer. 'Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will.' Touch all this toil and drudgery with that divine breath, divine with the divinity of Christ. Take that for your motive. Let in upon your work this heavenly illumination. You may be a servant, but never a slave. You are the Lord's and your own freeman. The gains will not be sordid. The mill will not grind out hardship and cruelty in the owner and overseer, with bitterness and rebellion in the operative. The will of God is a large will. It emancipates, it equalises, it gives titles of mobility impartially. Where it is there is liberty. Capital does not there tyrannise over labour; labour does not kill or burn capital. Judah does not vex Ephraim; Ephraim poor and weak does not envy privileged Judah. Rifle bullets on the borders are not then fired at a woman or child by savages whom Christian missions ought to have converted. And all this because of the everyday obedience to the everlasting will; all because that ceaseless prayer offered by the lips of millions of believers from age to age, the common liturgy of Christendom, 'Thy will be done on earth,' is answered. Nothing that you can count or reckon or weigh or eat or wear is the fruit of your labour, the treasure laid up. Your body will wear out, over-tasked, diseased, run down by time. God's consuming fire will try every man's work of what sort it is: but even His fire is love, and the soul of the workman who doeth His will, His obedient child, is safe.

BISHOP HUNTINGTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Intercessory Prayer. 'If I was ever brought into the kingdom of God,' said a venerable Christian lady, 'it was owing to the intercessions of old Dr. L. He married me, and he used often to call and speak a few earnest words to me about my soul. "You are now a wife and a mother," he would say; "do not delay to give yourself to the Lord, and to pray for grace to fulfil your duties. I shall never cease to plead for you."' The thought that a man of God was pleading for her before God, as well as pleading with her at the bar of her own conscience, was the point which seems to have made the impression. 'Why all this earnestness? Are not my own

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impressions far below what they ought to be, when my Heavenly Father, good men on earth, and holy angels in heaven, are so deeply concerned for me? Shall I be careless about my own eternal interests when heaven and earth are in constant communication respecting them?' This was the word of power which, like a touch to the helm of a vessel, turned the direction of her soul for time and eternity.

A Strong Church. 'Is it a strong congregation?' asked a man respecting a body of worshippers. 'Yes,' was the reply. 'How many members are there?' 'Seventy-six.' 'Seventy-six! Are they so very wealthy?' 'No, they are poor.' 'How, then, do you say it is a strong church?' 'Because,' said the gentleman, 'they are earnest, devoted, at peace, loving each other, and striving together to do the Master's work. Such a congregation is strong, whether composed of a dozen or five hundred members!' And he spoke the truth.

Heaven a Prepared Place for a Prepared People. A SCOFFING infidel, of considerable talents, being once in the company of a person of slender intellect, but a real Christian, and supposing, no doubt, that he should obtain an easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, put the following question to him: 'I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die; can you tell me what sort of a place heaven is?' 'Yes, sir,' replied the Christian, 'heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom you will never enter there.'

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	JEREMIAH XXIII. 5-8.
GOSPEL,	S. JOHN VI. 5-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	MICAH IV. OR V. VER. 8.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	MICAH VI. OR VII.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Cessation of Prophecy.

Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. MALACHI iv. 4, 5.



THESE are almost the last words of the Old Testament; they come in their place, not by accident, but because it is really the last word of prophecy uttered before the gospel was declared. Of Malachi himself we know nothing but his name; when he lived we can only guess. It is thought that it was about the time of Nehemiah's last visit to Jerusalem, because the sins that he charges the people with are much the same that Nehemiah records at that time; but the Jews say that he was a little later. However this may be, it is certain that he was the last of the prophets. He wrote this short book, having most likely spoken the words of it, as the prophets generally did, in the ears of the people, before they were written down; and men knew that they were the words, not of Malachi only,

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but of the Lord God of Israel, whose messenger he was. Then Malachi's work was done, his message ended; and sooner or later, after he had spoken this prophecy, he doubtless fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers.

And after him there arose not any like him. A thousand years before, the Lord had called Moses and made Himself known to him. He had been with Joshua and the other valiant men of Israel, strengthening them from time to time as He saw need; and then, after hiding Himself for a time, had spoken to men constantly for the last six hundred years. From the days of Samuel to these days of Malachi there had never been a generation without prophets, men who were chosen by God to speak the words of God. Much had happened in that time. Saul was made king and unmade; David and Solomon reigned gloriously; the nation was torn in two, and half became false to God; times grew worse, sin yet more general, and at last all the nations were carried out of their own land. They were now restored, and, weak as they were, were at last in some sort of comfort and prosperity. But all the while, amid their good or evil deserts, there had been one constant presence, the prophets of the Lord had been among them, telling them of their sins when at the worst, encouraging them whenever any made an effort to amend; sometimes honoured, sometimes persecuted, but never silent. Latterly, the prophets had begun, not only to speak what God bade them to the men of their own day, but to write some or all of the things they said, that later generations might read. Thus they had done for nearly four hundred years, from the days of Joel to Malachi's own. The Word of the Lord, that had begun from the day that He spake to Moses in Horeb, had been ever growing; there were to be found in Israel writings that came, not out of the minds of men, but out of the depths of the Spirit of the Eternal, books wherein every word was true, for they were the words of God Himself.

Now this was to be changed. Malachi died, and no other took his place. No man arose who came to Israel and said, 'Thus saith the Lord.' They were not left ignorant of the will of God, but they had to learn it, not from a living voice speaking among them, but from the books already written. They were indeed to learn something more some day, but not yet. It was enough for the present if they would keep what they had. 'Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments:' if they remembered that, all would be well.

And they did remember it. Partly, perhaps, from the remembrance of the great punishment of the captivity at Babylon; still more, I think, we may gather from the influence of the upright, single-hearted

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governor Nehemiah, and of Ezra, Malachi himself, and the other priests and prophets of this generation, the work was done which all God's miracles and all His former prophets had failed to do. The Jews henceforth would stick to their law and to the name of their God, whom before they had always been so ready to forsake. There was no lack of grievous sin among the Jews, there never yet was a whole nation of righteous men, and never will be; but, as a nation, they were what God had commanded them to be, a holy nation. They were persecuted by the heathen that ruled over them, as Daniel foretold: 'They shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days'; but in one way they did not fall, they would not fall down and worship the images which the kings of the Gentiles set up: their fall was only 'to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.' It is of this age of Israel's history that the Apostle is chiefly thinking where he speaks of those 'who through faith . . . were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword;' and all this they were content to bear rather than forget or forsake the law of Moses the servant of the Lord.

Yet all this time they had no prophet among them. When the temple was profaned by the heathen, and the high priest abandoned Jerusalem and fled into Egypt, so that the people had to choose a high priest for themselves, they were perplexed, and longed for a prophet to teach them, in God's name, how they were to act; but no prophet came. Afterwards, when peace was restored to Jerusalem, and Israel and Judah were able to live peaceably, as in the old days of Solomon, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, many of the sins of old time reappeared; but no prophet was sent to rebuke them. And one of the old sins, at least, had disappeared altogether. The nation was as firmly set against idolatry in the days of its prosperity as in the days of persecution. Whether they broke the law or kept it, they professed to honour it: the excuses they made for breaking it, which we hear of in the gospels, wicked and hypocritical as they were, yet showed that it was worth while for wicked men to be hypocritical, that neither their own feelings, nor those of their neighbours, would allow them to go on in open ungodliness.

However, whether the lessons taught by the former prophets were faithfully learned or no, they were not repeated. Four hundred years at least went by, and no prophet came. Yet the people did not cease to look for one: they remembered the law of Moses the servant of the Lord, how he had said: 'A prophet shall the Lord your

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God raise up unto thee out of thy brethren, like unto me': that promise had not been fulfilled yet, and they knew it was to be. Many prophets as there had been in Israel since then, there had not arisen any like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face; but one was to come, who was to be like him as none yet had been. They did not know who He would be: it seems from S. John that they were by no means sure whether He would be the same person as the Christ whom later prophets spoke of; but that there was a Prophet to come they all knew and believed.

And there was another Prophet also to come, of whom this latest of the old prophets speaks: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' Not only the Lord Himself should come, the Lord whom the people sought, the Messenger of the Covenant, but before Him a prophet, a preacher of repentance, full of the Spirit of the Lord, yet himself only one of the sons of men. The four hundred years did pass, and Elijah came; not, indeed, as the Jews seem to have expected, Elijah himself descending from heaven, whither he had been carried up alive by the chariot of fire; but one in the spirit and power of Elijah, turning the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And then only a few months passed, and the other Prophet came; a Prophet like, not only to Elijah, but to Moses; yea, greater than Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, for He knew the Lord even as the Lord knew Him. 'No man,' He said, 'knoweth who the Son is but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.'

And so the gift of prophecy was restored, while by the very restoration all the old prophecies began to be fulfilled. Of course, indeed, it was only a beginning. He who was foretold was not only to be a Prophet like unto Moses, but a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, a King meek and lowly. But it is the course of prophecy that we are now speaking of. This found its great perfection and fulfilment in the person of the Lord Jesus, who was, even in His human nature, filled by God with the Spirit, and called to the work of a Prophet, to make God known to men. With Him and after Him there came other prophets. We read in the Book of the Acts, and in S. Paul's epistles, of great numbers of them in the early Church; and a few of these not only taught by spoken words but have left to us, in the books of the New Testament, what they wrote, as well as said, by the Spirit of the Lord. But this outpouring of the gift of prophecy, as it was far more abundant than the old, and told far more of the deep things of God, so, on the other hand, it did not last as long. From Moses to Malachi was one thousand years; to John the Baptist, who was in truth the last and greatest of the Old Testa-

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ment prophets, was fifteen hundred ; but from the baptism of Christ to the death of S. John the Evangelist was hardly seventy years. Since then the world has gone on more than one thousand eight hundred years, but no new revelation has come to it : it may, if God so pleases, go on for hundreds of years more ; but, if so, we have to go on with what we have got, not receiving new. Indeed, our possessions are richer than those of the Jews after Malachi. The Lord says to us, not merely, 'Remember the law of Moses My servant,' but, 'Remember the gospel of Jesus My Son.' But our duty is, in kind, the same as theirs was, to remember what we have, to hold fast to it, and let nothing make us forget or renounce it ; and on the other hand, to expect something yet to come, which shall complete it. We do not feel that Malachi's promise concerns not ourselves when he says, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall come suddenly to His temple : ' the Lord whom ye seek has come and gone away, but we look for Him to come again. There is a new revelation of God to come, which shall come, which shall be as much greater than the gospel as the gospel was greater than the law ; only the way to prepare to receive the coming revelation is to keep faithful and loving hold on the old one. 'The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, when all the proud and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it leave them neither root nor branch : but unto them that fear the name of the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings,' that is a prophecy of things unseen, as much to us as it was to the Jews when they first heard the Word of the Lord by the hand of Malachi. I will not say that another coming of Elijah is to be looked for, though there is a prophecy of S. John's that is commonly so understood ; but the coming of the Lord there is no question about. We have to wait for Him, to prepare for Him ; and we know that a great change will come to us all when He appears. But the way to be ready for that change when it comes is to change nothing before. Those that fear the name of the Lord will, when He comes, be saying, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' just as He taught them to say before He went away. The last child that shall be born of a Christian man and wife before all faithful Christians go where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, the last stranger that shall be gathered into the Church before the number of the elect is accomplished, shall be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, just as were the first three thousand Christian converts on the day of Pentecost. Those that are alive, and remaining unto the coming of the Lord, will on the day when He comes still testify the same faith as all the generations did that have fallen asleep, in one God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, and in

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the Holy Ghost. All will go on exactly as it has. Just as unbelievers will say, as we already hear them saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' so the faithful have their answer ready: 'Here is the promise of His coming, even in this, that since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the gospel.' We match the world's unchangeableness by our own. The laws of grace shall be just as unchangeable as the laws of nature: 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' While the world remaineth, we will abide in the gospel we have received: he who preaches any other gospel, though he were an apostle or an angel from heaven, shall be held accursed. But yet the gospel is not God's last word, nor the graces of it His last gift or His best. There is something yet to wait for, the knowledge, not of God's Word only, but of God Himself. Until heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law, and far less from the gospel; but heaven and earth shall pass away, and then, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple,' and when He comes His word shall be forgotten in the fulness of His presence.

May that presence to us be what it shall be to those who fear His name, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

W. H. SIMCOX.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

Man's Justification by Christ.

And this is his name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.

JEREMIAH xxiii. 6.



order that you may perceive more accurately the nature and extent of this blessed privilege of imputed righteousness conferred upon you, it is necessary, briefly, to advert to the principal instances in which it is granted to us.

I. The first of these is baptism. In this ceremony the vicarial or substituted righteousness of Christ Himself becomes the grounds of our adoption among the children of grace. That very righteousness alone is the title of our promised inheritance, to which we are then conditionally admitted, and, as it were, sealed and consecrated by the Holy

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Spirit of God : for we are then, in a manner, through the justifying power of Christ's merits, mercifully accepted as our own—born again to the possession of spiritual benefits and privileges, to which, in the state of nature, we had not a single claim to prefer. Thus, in this office of our excellent Church, we thank God, that the child is regenerate, or born again, as soon as it has been the subject of that Sacrament, duly administered ; by which we mean, that through the interposition of the Saviour's atonement, implored for the remission of sins, *i.e.* for deliverance from God's wrath, and through the justifying power of his merits, applied to the human being baptized, he is now, by a second birth, as it were, admitted to the privilege of salvation, upon the terms and conditions prescribed by Christ in His gospel. The breath of another life is then breathed into him. He thereby actually enters on his Christian course, as 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' The spiritual effects of the fall may now, by the operation of God's Holy Spirit, and His own humble endeavours, henceforth be completely surmounted. God will, henceforth, if he keeps his part of the covenant, strengthen him through that Christ, who 'was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'

II. But, secondly, the justifying power of Christ avails us also in repentance ; and especially in that solemn act of penitence, the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. When the 'broken and contrite heart' has poured forth its sorrows to Him, who will thoroughly plead our cause before the Throne of Grace ; when it has unfeignedly abhorred and renounced the sin that had dominion over it, and has implored the mediation of the Redeemer, who has 'borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,' the forgiveness of its transgressions is then immediately vouchsafed, for the worthiness of our intercessor : for the sacrifice once offered by Christ is availing unto every man, till time shall be no more ; provided only his penitence be sincere, *i.e.* provided only his sin be forsaken. By His Cross He reconciles the penitent offender to his God, and, with the sense of pardon, pours into his heart the precious balm of joy and peace unspeakable.

III. But, lastly, the principal occasion of Christ's justificatory office to each of us individually will occur at that awful moment, when we shall stand before the tribunal of God in the day of judgment. At that solemn hour, when the book of life shall be opened before the trembling world, if our humble endeavours in this life shall have been accepted in Christ ; if our efforts to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and to 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, having persevered unto the end,' shall, through the Saviour's merits, procure for us that address, more precious than any sound that ever entered

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mortal ear,—‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!’—then shall we receive the glorious and final justification of the Redeemer.

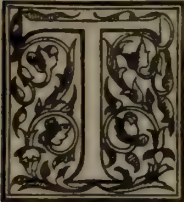
But the effects of that final justification, what mortal tongue may describe? He who ‘is gone to prepare a place’ for His faithful servants, will then ‘receive them unto Himself, that where He is, there may they be also.’ In that wondrous communion, they ‘shall behold His glory, which the Father hath given Him.’ They shall enter at once upon their inheritance, which shall be for ever; and, with their Saviour’s constant presence and favour, with faculties enlarged and purified, and exalted for such endless enjoyments, and, with the blissful society of angels, archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, they shall never cease to laud and glorify the God of their salvation, by that to us most endearing and transcendent of all appellations, so long before revealed by His prophet; namely, The Lord our Righteousness.

A. B. EVANS.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Sanctity of the Body.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world. S. JOHN VI. 14.

I.  HE Church must accept the responsibility of duty towards the body. That was recognised in the better days of the Church’s history. Wherever she moved, she learned to care for the bodily life of men. It grew out of Christ’s life; He showed that He cared for the bodies of men. Is there want of physical health? He will restore it. Is there pain? He will alleviate it. Whenever there is need, He will supply it. ‘They need not depart.’ Those hungry multitudes, and those weak forms of men, who gather round Him, need not depart; for the hand of Heaven is stretched out to relieve their wants. And reasonably so, if we reflect upon it; for form is the vehicle of expression of the spirit. Thus it is essential that the body should be cared for. Just as words are valuable to the orator to express his thoughts, so also are our bodies, to give expression to the thoughts and truths of inner life. God has made material things for a set purpose. Our bodies are to manifest life and the light which is within. If the grand idea of human life is that we are to be the expression of the love of God to one another, then this bodily fabric

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we possess is precious as the vehicle of its expression. The maintenance of health and strength is a duty, for when we employ the vehicle which is to give expression to the thoughts of God, can we allow it to be weakened by neglect, and rendered incapable of exercising its proper functions and duties? Our duty to the body means this—the sanctity of the body as the vehicle of the life and mind of God.

II. There is another reason also. We often forget how God has allied the unseen and the seen together. All life is one sphere, but it is a sphere in which one half lies in shadow; the things seen lie in the light of the immediate present, but the other half is shadowed in things unseen and spiritual. These form but one sphere that is moving according to law. Upon my bodily condition depends for good or evil my mental power. The deranged frame means the dull wit and the weak will. Let the bodily fabric be disordered, and power is lost. Can you feel your heart ready of sympathy when you are distracted by pain or agony? What is your judgment worth when you are not in a fit state to make up your mind? We cannot make men spiritual when their physical surroundings are such that they can have no capacity for entering into the glories of unseen things. We must deal practically with three questions, and the duty of doing so our Lord taught when He said, ‘Give ye them to eat.’

III. Our Lord emphasises the practical duty of caring for the bodies of men, but on the other hand He says, ‘This is not everything.’ The care for the needs of men is a solemn duty, but you must not teach men that when they have eaten and drunken, they may die. This is to forget that man is made to give expression to the divine thought. It is to forget that our spirits need the bread of heaven. But our Lord remembered all human needs. He is the Christ who cares for the body. He knows the weariness of mind which results from bodily labour. He knows the state of this poor worn-out frame. We worship no Christ who ignores the condition of our life, but we worship the Christ who, understanding the physical needs of nature, said, ‘They need not depart; give ye them to eat.’ None of us must sink down into an animal existence. We have been created for God, we must hunger after the true bread of life; we must feed upon Him, that we may grow like unto Him. In this struggling life, how we often feel as though we would put our burden down and leave it! But we need not give way; let us rise up again in strong spiritual heroism—gird our loins once more. Is it not well worth while to endure a little longer? Even out of this burden shall be given us the spiritual food that shall make us grow into His likeness, and when we wake up in His likeness, we shall be satisfied that we may rise with Him to His triumphant kingdom.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

How to please God.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? MICAH vi. 6-8.



ANY and various in all ages have been the answers to that question of the text, but in spirit and principle they reduce themselves to the three, which in these verses are tacitly rejected, that the fourth may be established for all time. And, therefore, this is one of those palmary passages of Holy Writ, which should be engraved on every instructed conscience as indelibly as by a pen of iron upon the living rock. It formulates the best teaching of religion; it corrects the worst errors of superstition. Every book of Scripture, every voice of nature, every judgment of conscience re-echoes and confirms it. Happy will it be for us, if we will use it as a lamp to guide our footsteps, a law to direct our life.

I. The first answer is, Will Levitical sacrifices suffice? 'Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?' that is, 'Shall I do some outward act, or acts, to please God?' Men are ever tempted to believe in this virtue of doing something; to ask, as they often asked our Lord, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And there are times when such external systems may, for ignorant and stiff-necked nations, be a wise safeguard. It was so for the Israelites at the Exodus, depressed and imbruted as they were by long slavery, and saturated with heathen traditions of cruelty and vice. But external observances, without inward holiness, are but the odious whiteness of the sepulchre. 'Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto Me,' saith God to such, 'your sabbaths and calling of assemblies I cannot away with.' Fasting may be necessary, only do not take it for religion; but, on the other hand, look at home; loose the bands of wickedness, your own and others; undo the heavy burdens, your own and others; take the beam out of your own eyes; wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.

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That is dearer in God's eyes than perpetual sacrifice, holier and purer than days of unbroken fast.

II. If then we cannot please God by merely doing, can we by giving? 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil?' Shall we like the Pagans try to bribe God? Shall we make His altars swim with the blood of hecatombs, and fill His sanctuaries with votive gold? Or shall we like terrified sinners, in the Middle Ages, think to buy off His anger by bequeathing our possessions to charity or to the Church? I suppose that while not one of us is so ignorant as not to know the duty of charity, none of us is so exquisitely foolish, as to imagine that he can by gifts win his way one step nearer to the great White Throne. Sacrifices, to bribe Him whose are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? Gold or gems to Him, before whom the whole earth, were it one entire and perfect chrysolite, would be but as an atom in the sunbeam!

III. If then neither by doing, nor by giving, can we please God, what third experiment shall we try? shall it be by suffering? Shall I, lacerating my heart in its tenderest affections, give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? This, too, has been frequently and fearfully attempted; frequently, and fearfully, and more persistently than any other, because in all ages, and in all nations, men have invested God with the attributes of terror and of wrath.

They fled from the society of their fellows to vast wildernesses, or desolate hills, or wave-washed caverns. Knowing their sin, not knowing their Saviour, gazing in remorse and tears at the splendours of Sinai, not coming in humble penitence to the Cross of Calvary—life became to them an intolerable fear. When a man feels that the eye of God is fixed upon him in anger, and he knows not how to escape, then no mountain seems too heavy, no sea too deep, no solitude too undisturbed.

But has any man ever found these sufferings sufficient? Has any man ever testified that he found forgiveness through voluntary torture? Or is not that true which is said of the prophets of Baal, 'They leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner. And it came to pass that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.'

Yet if all these be at the best but unacceptable ways, what is the true way of pleasing God? If not by doing, not by giving, not by suffering, then how? What is the Prophet's answer? By being. 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' God needs not our services; He needs not

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our formulæ; He needs not our gifts; least of all does He need our anguish; but He needs us, our hearts, our lives, our love; He needs it, and even this He gives us; shedding abroad the Spirit of Adoption in our hearts. If we resist not that Spirit, we need no longer be what we are; no longer what we have been. All meanness and malice, all deceitfulness and fraud, all injustice and insolence, all pharisaism and uncharity, all worldliness and lust will fall away from us, and we shall be clothed, as with a wedding garment which Christ shall give, with justice, and humanity, and purity and love. Oh, if we would indeed know how to serve Him aright, let us put away all idle follies and fancies of our own; and seating ourselves humbly at His feet amid those poor and ignorant multitudes who sat listening to Him among the mountain lilies, let us learn the spirit of His own beatitudes: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

DEAN FARRAR.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Character independent of Circumstances.

I tell you that in that night . . . two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. S. LUKE XVII. 34, 36.

- I.  UR Lord, in order to press upon us the great law of our self-determination to help us to be honest with ourselves, to guard us from the temptation of turning the blame of our failure on to circumstances, carries us into the heart of things as they are in a startling fashion. Amid all the apparent outward uniformity of life, underneath the dull grey mass of human life which is apparently neither heroic nor utterly degraded, out of the same ordinary monotonous circumstances the strangest divergencies between man and man, He tells us, are now being formed and are slowly evolving themselves. He holds up to us three typical instances of sudden, sharp and decisive separations which the crisis of His coming will produce. People that look the same now will be seen to be different. The day will declare them. Even now every

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great event in life seems to bring out what men are making themselves into. Sharp appeals evoke character.

Our Lord's own coming was in this sense a separation, a judgment, but it is so presumably with every event that attracts attention, and stirs depths within men. Even in strongest bond of mutual love divisions may be growing daily more dependent, more emphasised by the way in which each meets circumstances. Further and further apart man and wife may grow, while conscious only of a deepened union, life glides on smoothly, nothing evident arises to bring tendencies to a head, and yet underneath absolute diversity is growing day by day, and quite possibly nothing outward may lift up the veil and declare it till that meeting with Christ, which at death or judgment calls out all that is in man and brings his self-determination to a head. And so He tells us how unexpected, how unlooked for will be some of the effects of His coming. I tell you in that night two men shall be in one bed, two enduring the same discipline of sickness or adversity, two crushed under the same calamity, two the victims of some overwhelming sorrow, and the crisis comes, in one it has done its work, on the other it has failed, in the apparent unity of a common woe there is found absolute diversity of character!

II. He goes on to emphasise the same truth: 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left,' *i.e.* two are subjected to the same dull monotonous wearying occupation, sweeping rooms or cleaning stairs, with great capacities chained to teaching elementary things for the bread to live by, two sitting in one workroom at the same dreary tasks, the one shall be taken, the other left. Out of it all one has grown by industry and patience and trust and lifting up of her heart to God, and the other has shrivelled into hard repining and bitter complaining and envious thoughts and hopeless railings at God. Each when looked at so different, yet early and late each went through the same monotonous task. Two men shall be in the field, two, *i.e.* with an active life before them, a life full of occupation, mental and intellectual or bodily and physical. Two men reading for honours in the same school, with the same books, the same temptations to be merely showy and superficial, and the same opportunities of real moral as well as intellectual growth through patient industry and painstaking accuracy; two employers of labour considering their workmen: the one scheming to grind out of them the most work at least wages, and the other with the aim of just and fair dealings always before him, and considering that always and everywhere the Master is among us in the form of a servant; two men preparing for holy orders, the one with the hope of rising to a high place, or to opportunities of self-display, the other with an nearest desire that ever grows that anyhow and anywhere but some-

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how and somewhere the great Master may use him to heal the wounds of His people and to be the humble means of ministering to them His own life. There they are with same temptations, same circumstances, same opportunities, the one shall be taken and the other left. So powerless, so less than nothing are circumstances so impotent to produce a result. Out of the self-same daily round such different results come. So imperious is character, so free from the control of the very circumstances, which are its daily occasions.

Does it not shame us when we complain feebly as we do about circumstances, does it not force upon us that in our dreams of life we must not demand circumstances, but force ourselves to that self-making which shall enable us to be their masters. Is not the real consideration not how I may get out of my surroundings, but how blessed for me if my Lord when He comes shall find me working humbly and patiently in the field where He has placed me, true to Him, and true to His Cross? Then all else is nothing.

CANON EYTON.

Christian Consecration.

Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. ROMANS XIV. 8, 9.

I. **W**HAT does S. Paul's argument imply about New Testament Christianity? That in its very nature it is at once quite full of the powers of the world to come, and quite free from the strange fire of the fanatic. Here is a life whose every inner movement, and therefore its whole outer surface, is to be ruled from its depths by a supernatural relation to a supernatural person. Here is a life, for S. Paul means not an iota less, in which the man is not to entertain an emotion, not to form a thought, without reference to the will of the slain and living Christ who reigns over him supreme. Yet on the other side here is a life in which the same man, not in spite of this supernatural relation, but in direct issue from it, is to throw himself into the intercourse of the common day with a watchful regard for others, and a generous respect for their opinions, and the kindest attention to all their claims. Such a temper is the precise antithesis to that of the fanatic. But it is the characteristic temper of the religion whose other characteristic is that it roots itself wholly in the supernatural, the eternal, the divine; in nothing less than the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and rose and revived from the depth of that great death for us, that He might be the Lord of us dead and living. Such is the Christianity

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of the New Testament; perfectly supernatural (so it asserts) in its origin and secret; and perfectly sane, temperate, considerate, in its application of itself to human life.

This phenomenon runs all through the blessed book. The secrets and certainties of heavenly joy and power lie there in congenial neighbourhood with the healthiest precepts of common duty. 'We shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord: study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands.' 'Be ye filled with the Spirit; filled with all the fulness of God: masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal.' 'Believing in Him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the salvation of your souls: honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.'

Such are the motives of the gospel, drawn from the bright recesses of God, of Christ, of the work of the Holy Ghost, of the hope of glory. Such are the issues of those motives in the day-light sanity, the generous wholesomeness, of gospel morals. In the living harmony of such characteristics lies one of the strongest and most pregnant of the assurances that we who believe have not followed cunningly devised fables, but rest upon the rock. Delusion, illusion, small part had they in the genesis of a gospel, which at once, and by the same act, opened the heaven of heavens to the human soul and called it to throw its energies into the unselfish service of the hour.

But is that rock then solid? Are these motives genuine? Is this Jesus Christ of the Cross and the Resurrection at once the supreme fact of history and the way, the truth, and the life, for the needs and experience of the man? Then let us turn back to the text, and listen with new and definite attention to its account of the essential and innermost relations between Christ and the Christian. How does it run? 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' And why? Because just this was the great purpose of our most blessed Redeemer. 'To this end He died and lived again, to this end, that He might be Lord.'

II. You observe the point and scope of the words. S. Paul here does not describe a universal Christian experience; he does not say that 'we' are all self-devoted to our Master. He insists upon a universal Christian law; he says that we disciples are all absolutely bound to be thus self-devoted, for we are all purchased to be our Master's property.

It is this law, this constant spiritual fact, that Jesus Christ is the autocratic owner of His followers, and then the resultant of it in His call to them to consent *ex animo* to His possession, to yield

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themselves out and out to the will of God in Christ, that I seek to hold up before you this afternoon. A more familiar tenet in the abstract I could not lay before a Christian assembly. But is it not just one of those truths which mean practically next to nothing while they are entertained as it were in the air and at a distance, but which for many of even convinced and devout Christians need only to be brought home, to be translated into here and now, in order to become discoveries of a new world, revolutions that bring in a new age in the history of the soul? It is one thing to regard our Lord with sincere homage in a large and general sense, holding fast through His mercy all the great treasures of Catholic belief about His glorious Person, resting the burdens of conscience on His sacrifice and intercession, and recognising the duty of at least a tacit and constructive loyalty to Him in the main outlines of life. It is another thing when the man discovers, with an insight perfectly calm and genuine, while yet it is given him from above, that what the Redeemer claims, and annexes, and appropriates, is nothing less than all the being, and all its action. It is a wonderful thing to discover that, not in figures and flights of speech but in sober fact, 'every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' if Christ is to have His due; that the will is to be laid in simplicity at His feet; that all faculties of the mind, and all their growth and all their gains, are to be presented honestly to Him for His far-reaching purposes; that reputation, when and while it is granted, is only a trust for Him; that material possessions are only a trust for Him; that our time is His, all His, morning, noon and night, without interval or vacation; that our tongues are indeed His, in their every word; that 'whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do,' all of it is to be done 'to the glory of God,' in this sense of a reference of the whole of life to Him. 'For whether we live we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord. For to this end He died and lived again.'

III. 'Let us give ourselves up to God,' says holy Fénelon, true practiser of his own preaching, 'without reserve or apprehension of danger. He will love us, and make us to love Him; and that love increasing shall produce in us all the other virtues. He alone shall fill our heart, which the world has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will alter, perhaps, little in our actions, and only correct the motive of them by making them all to be referred to Himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent actions shall become exercises of virtue. Then we shall cheerfully behold death approach as the beginning of life immortal. And we shall then discover the depth of the mercy which God has exercised towards us.' *Illi servire est regnare*; 'Who lives His bondman, he is king.'

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‘And whether we die we die unto the Lord.’ If I read the Apostle’s Greek aright he means that not in death only, *in articulo*, but after death, in the state of the departed, we shall hold unbroken this relation of surrender to Him; the bond servant to the possessing Lord.

‘For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love;
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is written that His servants there
Shall serve Him still.’

Yes; we will not doubt it. This word of the Apostle’s looks altogether that way. And so that prescription of the Old Law about the self-enslaved Hebrew shall be fulfilled in the immortality of the Christian; ‘I will not go out free; then thou shalt pierce his ear, and he shall serve thee, for ever.’

It is a view of death, when death in God’s time comes, full at once of soberest calm and a most vivid happiness, this passing, just as a faithful and willing bondservant, from one mansion to another of the same Lord. ‘Here am I, for thou didst call me!’ A holy awe, but no misgiving tremor, shall mark such a transition, as the Christian goes from the peace of being his Master’s here to the bliss of being his Master’s there; ‘according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.’

H. C. G. MOULE.

The Sunday before Advent.

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. S. MARK i. 14, 15.

THE recurrence of the beginning of the Advent season carrying our minds back to the first appearance of Jesus Christ with its preparation and accompaniments may serve to reawaken our attention to the fact that it is described in the original documents of the Christian Church as being not so much the proclamation of a new doctrine of theology and morals but rather the establishment of a new kingdom, called indifferently the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and the Christ Himself, are both recorded to have commenced their ministry with the same declaration, The kingdom of God is at hand. But yet they are not imagined to be announcing something altogether new and unexpected; they are rather proclaiming the fulfilment of general

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and long-cherished hopes. They are bidding their Jewish hearers observe the orderly development of their national history. The time, the due season, for the manifestation of this kingdom has been fulfilled—the whole history of the people has been leading up to it. Israel had in some imperfect and rudimentary manner been the kingdom of God, ruled by a divine law, practising a ritual of worship implying communion between God and man, holding fast amid all confusions the primary truths of the unity, personality, and spirituality of God; but this kingdom had failed to realise the grand ideal of a perfect Kingdom of God, for it was restricted to one nation and not cosmopolitan; it tended to harden into a formal ceremonial system, crushing out righteousness of conduct and spiritual worship; it was concerned too much with things outward and material. In its chequered history of conflict with foreign nations during the period of the monarchy Israel had been disappointed and vanquished, till, after having lost its own national rulers, it had fallen successively under Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman rule; but still in its worst days of oppression under a foreign yoke, it cherished the expectation of a great deliverer in the person of one whom their Prophets had described as ‘the Son of David.’ In another of their Prophets this expectation had been raised to a yet higher conception of the appearance of ‘a Son of Man’ who was to be put into possession of a kingdom which was both universal and everlasting (Dan. vii. 14). Some hope of restoration survived even in the darkest days. The belief in the coming of some Anointed One, to be at once King and Prophet, was universal, however unworthy may have been the conception of his mission and office.

I. And now at a time of deep depression and in a generation which was destined to see the destruction of Jerusalem, the sacred capital of the nation and the centre of all its religious associations, Jesus begins in the distant provincial towns of Galilee to declare openly that the foreordained season has arrived, and that the Kingdom of God has actually come nigh.

This Kingdom of God was proclaimed by Jesus Christ on His Advent as immediately at hand—its rise was to be expected. Baptism of believing men was appointed as the mode of admission into it, the seal of the new birth into the spiritual world; the Eucharist was the covenant bond of fellowship between the King and His subjects and between the subjects themselves; and these religious ordinances wherever they are observed are signs of the kingdom, for they are plainly observances of what the Founder of the kingdom had commanded for perpetual use. But can we now, after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries from the first Advent of Jesus Christ, say that the grand ideal which the Scriptures of the New Testament set before us

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has been realised? What is the visible manifestation of the triumph of the kingdom? Where is its unity, its universality, its sanctity? Alas! we must confess that there is a wide divergence between the actual and the ideal. Spiritual kingdoms which own a far different king than Christ still sway whole peoples and languages. The kingdom so far as it is manifested in the Church is divided against itself. Eastern, Roman, Anglican Christianity, and vast organisations of religious communities external to all these, divide Christendom. The sole kingship of Christ in His Church has not been duly recognised, attempts have been made to create on earth a visible king of the Church, in the form of Pope, or Czar, or National Ruler; in days of degeneracy the Church has forgotten that she is not of this world, though her mission is in the world, that the weapons of her warfare are not carnal, and has failed to act upon the precepts of her Founder; her rulers have too frequently sought for themselves worldly influence or wealth instead of pursuing disinterestedly the moral and spiritual improvement of those committed to their charge. The immorality of the unregenerate world has found its way into what purports to be the kingdom of righteousness. If we are terribly disappointed at the sad contrast between what is and what might have been, we may find some consolation in the reflection that Jesus Himself never gave men reason to expect the speedy and unopposed triumph of His kingdom. Nay, He even condemned as premature the attempt to separate utterly the evil and the good. It is only at the harvest, *i.e.* the end of this world, that the Son of Man will send forth His angels to gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity. And in the same way the emblem of the net which is used to illustrate the history of the kingdom teaches us to anticipate that it is only at the end of the world that the severance of the wicked from among the righteous will be effected. Why this weary conflict of good and evil even within the pale of the kingdom of righteousness is permitted is a profound mystery which we cannot fathom. It may serve ulterior purposes hidden from our present knowledge. But meanwhile it teaches us lessons, not of despondency, but of patience. We men are apt to hurry on events, God's purposes move slowly through the ages.

II. It may, however, be wise and profitable for us to reflect more steadily, that if it was the declared purpose of Jesus Christ to establish a kingdom, of which His Church was to be in the world the chief organ of manifestation, it ought not to be a matter of indifference to any whether they associate themselves in fellowship with that Church, and endeavour to promote its high and noble ends.

It is a spurious liberality, professing to be wiser than Christ Himself, which holds itself aloof from communion with the great spiritual

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society, and leads men with some affectation of personal superiority to boast of being Christians unattached. If such a profession or Christianity claims to be in accordance with precedents of the New Testament, we repudiate that claim as unsustained by facts. Christ taught a doctrine which we believe on His authority, but He also founded a kingdom, which though in its full completion it is yet invisible, He led us to believe would be visible in a society of men, who were to form the body of which He would ever remain the Head. In the Apostolic days those who gladly received the word of the gospel were instantly without exception received into the society by Christ's own appointed sign, baptism, thereby becoming members of a body, soldiers of a great army, sheep of one flock. They were united in one body, confessing one spirit, one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. In the other great divinely ordained ordinance, the Supper of the Lord, they ate of one bread, and drank of one cup, holding fellowship with their common Lord and Saviour who had given His Body and Blood for their salvation. They joined in a common worship, they provoked one another to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together. Is it not a melancholy declension from such Apostolic precedents, that in our own time and country multitudes of those who profess and call themselves Christians separate themselves so far from their fellow Christians that they never join with them in such high acts of devotion as Holy Communion; that intelligent and educated men and women will allow attendance at some highly ornate musical service on a Sunday afternoon to be almost their sole outward profession of Christianity; that they will adopt language which implies that they are patrons and friends from without of the Church rather than members of that great society by whose laws they ought to govern their conduct, and whose mission in the world ought to be shared by themselves?

III. If the kingdom of God is to vindicate its claim to universality and ultimate triumph, it must aim more earnestly than as yet it has ever done at the permeation of all political and social life with Christian principles of action. We all admit that in the conduct of individual life nothing is more fatal to the true realisation of religion than the divorce between religion and morality: but it is no less disastrous to banish religion from the social life of politics and commerce. The eternal principles of righteousness and unselfishness, which are the distinguishing marks of the Kingdom of God, must govern the relations of nation towards nation, and of governing powers towards all the various classes in each separate political community. The Church, if it is to be the true representative of the kingdom, must bear witness against tyranny and oppression, and an

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aggressive policy of natural aggrandisement. In commercial life the Church must not through cowardice or through adulation of wealth and power forbear to proclaim that the law of Christ demands that we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us. Inculcating love, sympathy, goodness, gentleness, she must endeavour to evoke a true sense of brotherhood in Christ. She will try to understand what is the meaning of the cry for equality, and whilst refusing to be carried away by any specious theory of an absolute equality which is contradicted by all the observed facts of the inequalities of strength and skill and knowledge, she will strive to ascertain what are the conditions of that justice which consists of giving each his due. Some of the leading thinkers of our own age and country have recently been discussing the question whether the absolute truths of political science can be applied without modification to the actual direction of the affairs of life, and are disposed to answer such an inquiry in the negative. Perhaps the Church of Christ may be wise in holding that the laws of Political Economy, which are gained from the isolated observation of one class of phenomena only, must, in their application to such difficult modern problems as that of the proper relation between Capital and Labour, be modified by moral and spiritual consideration of the Christian duty of man towards his fellow-men. The kingdom of God will never reign widely if it should appear that the Church is always on the side of the rich and the strong and the noble.

Is it too much to hope that it may be reserved for the Church of Christ, working from within, to solve the social problem? It should be the duty of each one of us in our own sphere to act in the spirit of our daily prayer to our Heavenly Father, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth.'

W. INCE.

Godly Exercise.

Exercise thyself unto godliness ; for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. I TIMOTHY IV. 7, 8.

THE imagery drawn from athletic contests which S. Paul employed so often became fixed in the language of the Christian Church ; but I think with this difference, that S. Paul ordinarily has the foot race in his mind, whereas the early Christian writers are more commonly thinking of pugilistic or even gladiatorial combats. Indeed this comparison was forced on the Christian. For according to the cruel tastes of the time, the spectacle of Christians torn by wild beasts,

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or subjected to other tortures, was commonly presented as an agreeable variety to the monotony of gladiatorial contests. Athletes came to be a recognised term for the martyrs. In more than one early account of a martyrdom, the sufferer's confession, first before the magistrate, afterwards in the arena, is looked on as a single combat, in which Satan, acting through his ministers, the persecutors, strives to beat down his antagonist's constancy, while the Christian hero—or rather Christ, the invincible athlete in whose might he is arrayed—triumphs over his deadly enemy and wins the crown of victory.

I. The training, too, for the conflict with the evil one had an important place in Christian thought, though designated by a name not applied to it in the New Testament, *ἄσκησις*. It was the classical name for the discipline an athlete had to undergo; it had been applied by Philo to the austerities of certain Jewish sects, and possibly it was through him that the word came into Christian use, which begins, as far as I know, with Clement of Alexandria, who was a diligent student of Philo. In the earliest Christian use of the word *ἄσκησις*, nothing requires us to understand it of other than that self-discipline which is the duty of every disciple of our Lord. But soon those only were recognised as *ἄσκηται*, who practised a severity of discipline not expected from ordinary Christians. When the Decian persecution broke out, a number of Egyptian Christians made their escape into the deserts, where under a mild climate they were able to gain for themselves a frugal sustenance, remote alike from the dangers and the cares of social life. This monastic life retained its popularity after the persecution had ceased; for while, on the one hand, it was an attraction to be able to shake off all the troublesome responsibilities which lie on those who mix with their fellow-men, on the other hand the idea that in retiring from men they drew nigh unto God, and that in ceasing to toil for the things of earth they were securing for themselves a heavenly inheritance, stripped of all its ignobleness what might otherwise have been regarded as a lazy and cowardly running away from duty. The solitary life came to be even accepted as the higher one, and they who practised it to be called in the pre-eminent sense *ἄσκηται*.

II. In this as in other instances, the separation from ordinary Christians of a class supposed to be aiming at especial sanctity had the effect of depressing the general standard. *Askesis* came to be regarded as a thing to be expected from none but monks; and the words ascetic and asceticism have considerably changed their meaning. Even in the Roman Catholic Church what we now call asceticism is regarded as an object rather of admiration than of imitation; and among Protestants it has fallen into such disrepute that if it could be

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reported of a preacher that he was inculcating asceticism, he would be apt to be set down as ignorant of the gospel.

Yet you will not require me to take pains to prove to you that S. Paul's exhortation to his youthful disciple to train and discipline himself unto godliness has not lost its applicability now that days of persecution are over, now that we are not likely to be called on in any such sense as he to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. When we examine closely the language of the Apostles and inquire what was it that rendered necessary so much toil and so much vigilance as they demanded from their converts, we find that those causes held a very subordinate place, which are peculiar to that age; that comparatively little room is taken up with exhortations to that self-denial which is to be exercised in enduring external persecution, but far more to that self-denial which is still demanded of us, the denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and the mortifying the works of our earthly members. Even those passages where we should expect to find the enduring of persecution exclusively treated of, turn out to contain exhortations adapted to every period of the Church's history. When, for example, S. Peter commences an exhortation with the words, 'Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind,' we should anticipate that the constancy which he recommends to his readers had reference exclusively to those trials which are only met with in the time of the Church's adversity; but as we read on we find that the firmness on which he insists was to be displayed not so much in bearing the insults as in avoiding the vices of the Gentiles. 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot.' You see then that the objects to which the training of the apostolic age was directed are not essentially different from those which must be aimed at still.

III. In speaking of training, something must be said about abstinence, which has always been recognised as an essential part of the trainer's discipline. That you should abstain from unlawful pleasures is a point on which I need not insist; since it is one on which you do not need to be taught to know your duty. But it comes under the general topic of the importance of cultivating our faculties by exercise; that you should in this way maintain the authority of your conscience by preserving its sensitiveness and promptly obeying its dictates. Any one who has used an alarum clock to wake him, knows

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that if after it has roused him he turns to sleep again, after a couple of days it will wake him no longer. In like manner conscience, if disregarded, will cease to warn, while its rightful rule over the lower parts of our nature is speedily lost if they are permitted to triumph over her.

But the case is less plain when the question is concerning abstinence from lawful pleasures. About the time of the foundation of the Christian Church there came from the East a great wave of ascetic teaching. The doctrine was, that matter was the source of all evil, and that man's great object ought to be to obtain release from its dominion; that the body was thus the enemy of the soul, and the depression of the body the thing to be aimed at in self-cultivation. To live without food being impossible, at least as little as possible ought to be taken. Flesh-meat was forbidden; so also was wine and marriage. Such teaching had already made itself heard in S. Paul's time. He had to protest against those whose watchword was, Touch not, taste not, handle not. Before the end of his career he had to contend with those who had forbid to marry and commanded to abstain from meats, against whom he laid down the principle that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. But notwithstanding the Apostle's resistance, the doctrine grew, and had wide prevalence in the Gnostic sects, which were among the most formidable of the Church's enemies in the second century. Accordingly in an early canon which dealt with the subject of abstinence, it was sanctioned if practised δι' ἄσκησιν οὐ διὰ βδελυρίαν; that is to say, if a man abstained for the sake of discipline, but not because he abominated the things themselves. But it is remarkable how in every controversy men are apt to imbibe a certain amount of their opponents' principles, admitting some of the most plausible of their assertions and only singling out for attack those the falsity of which they think themselves best able to expose. Thus in the present case, though it was denied that the abstinence inculcated by the Gnostics was a duty or necessity for all Christians, it was commonly recognised as a higher kind of life, and the depression of the body was regarded as an advance towards Christian perfection. The vegetarian was imagined to be living a higher life and to be a better Christian than the flesh-eater, the celibate than the married man. I do not think it necessary now to teach you that body and soul are not enemies but intimate allies, and that neither can suffer without injury to the other. To do anything inconsistent with keeping the body in a state of perfect health and efficiency is not only no Christian duty, but is a breach of the trust committed to us. This, however, being fully conceded, it must also be owned that in our

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modern life, with regard to matters of food and drink, excess prejudicial to health of body as well as of mind is the extreme into which men are most likely to fall ; and that the opposite side is the one in leaning to which men are least likely to fall into hurtful errors.

The ordinary history of victory over temptation is that it is obtained less by direct contest with it than by a rush of thoughts carrying the mind another way. In direct contest we resist an allurements to unlawful pleasures ; but the allurements presents itself again, and if, perhaps, we resist again, yet again the allurements is presented, and at length we fall. But the case is otherwise if a longing for higher and better pleasures has been excited, in view of which the meaner lose their power to tempt us. The early apologists for our religion were able to boast with truth that under its teaching the lascivious man had become chaste, the knave had become honest. Was it Christ's moral teaching, excellent as it was, that made that change ? Nay, how should distant nations have become acquainted with that teaching ? What sent forth into the world the apostolic missionaries, counting nothing of toil or persecution, cold or nakedness, peril or the sword ? What still induces men to forsake the ease and comfort of civilised life, in order to make known to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ ? Not conviction of the excellence of the lessons of a wise teacher, but personal love to Him who died to redeem us. And still there is no greater instrument for holy living than those emotions which rise in us when we call to mind the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Christ in dying for us ; for the love of Christ constraineth us that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. G. SALMON.

Yesterday, To-day, and for Ever.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. HEBREWS xiii. 8.

AS these words stand in our Bible, their connection is not clear. The author is urging upon his readers that they should have in remembrance those who had preached the gospel to them, and should follow their faith. 'Remember them which . . . have spoken unto you the Word of God ; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.' Then, without any grammatical connection, come the words of my text, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' And then, an exhortation that they should not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, that their hearts should be established with grace.

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The authors of the Revised Version have laid the English reader under an obligation, by making clear what before was somewhat confused. 'Remember them which . . . spake unto you the word of God; and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever. Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings.'

I. The words, 'yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' were no doubt used by the author of the epistle in the proverbial sense at that time given to them. They declared that from the ages to the ages Christ changeth not, that from eternity to eternity Jesus Christ is the same. But they may serve also to throw us back in mind to the time at which they were written, a time when in one sense they were literally and vividly true; when so far as the Christian knowledge of Christ was concerned, the whole of the Christian past was but as yesterday.

We find it difficult to realise with any fulness the conditions of Christian life in those days, and the advantage and disadvantage to the Christian preacher and the Christian convert of the recent character of the events on which the one based his teaching, the other his conviction. The Christian of those days would have found it much more difficult to forecast the Christian faith and practice, the Christian difficulties and the Christian advantages of a time eighteen hundred years after him, when events, vividly fresh to him, should have become matters of far-off history. At the natural creation germs were sown which have developed according to the laws imposed upon them, and have produced the marvels that surround us. The revelation of Christ planted a spiritual germ, the developments of which have been manifold, bewildering in the diversity of their character. As the spirit is vastly freer than the body, so the spiritual germ expands to all appearance unfettered, free, so far as we can see, from everything resembling the stringent laws which govern the growth of the natural organism. My text speaks of 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;' but while Jesus Christ remains the same for ever, man's ideas of Jesus Christ have varied greatly, and vary greatly still. To different ages Jesus Christ has been different; different in power, in operation, in nature; to different men, nay, to the same man at different stages of the man's development; He is different still. But all the time, while men have been forming feeble and varying conceptions of Him, He has been the same. What age has been least feeble and least wide of the truth in its conception of that which is inconceivable, what men or what school of the present age are most near to the truth, it is beyond the power of man to know.

It would be an interesting occupation to consider the effect of the gospel message eighteen hundred years ago and now upon men of

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various temperaments; how far the man of sceptical mind is more or less likely now, than then, to receive what we believe to be the truth; with what greater or less persuasiveness the careless man is appealed to now; whether the proud, self-confident nature is brought with less difficulty to bow the knee to Christ; whether, in short, the saving force of the gospel has become decidedly greater or less, when brought to bear upon the conversion of one individual soul. It would be a complicated question, for while we have gained so much in some respects, we have lost much in others. One point would certainly be brought out bright and clear, that whatever else has changed, however different in form the appeal may be, however great the advantage of the general profession of Christianity, however great the advantage of much that has overlaid the simplicity and purity of the faith once delivered to the saints, there is in the foundation itself, in the vital essence, no change whatever. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

II. But while we speak of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, we have to bear in mind the endless diversities of temperament which mark and have marked the nations and the men to whom Christ has come. The early teacher who, like S. Paul, had knowledge of the difficulties of the gospel, among different classes and different kinds of men, saw that it was necessary to make himself all things to all men, that he might save some. As he passed from men of a low type of civilisation to those of higher and higher developments, he would see, if his eye were keen, something the same differences of reception, and comprehension, and outward effect, that the historian sees, when he traces the Christian germ from his pagan ancestor through the centuries of continual change down to himself and his generation; much as the traveller descending to the plain from the heights of the Himalayas or the Andes observes almost the same changes in vegetation which we would see in a journey from the pole to the equator. The differences which we see and deplore among Christians of the same sorts or different countries, the changes in profession, in practice, which we mark in the Christian history of a nation, resolve themselves into this, that as S. Paul made himself all things to all men, so all men make to themselves all things of the story of Christ. We are naturally inclined to view with some impatience those who differ from us on matters of such vast importance as the Christian verities; but our experience of ordinary life can show us an abundance of cases where men, equally honest in purpose, draw conclusions opposite in character from facts which both allow. We are inclined to blame our forefathers at times for their superstition, at times for their violence in matters of religion, but, I think, we often blame them unjustly. They were apprehending after their fashion,

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and with such power as they possessed, those same verities which we ourselves can only apprehend as we are, not as others will be a hundred years hence. A like consideration, honestly applied to our own contemporaries, would tend to the development of a larger meed of Christian charity.

It is one of the most powerful of the incidental arguments for Christianity, that it has gone through almost every possible phase, and yet we may fairly claim that it is possessed of greater vitality at this present time than it ever possessed before. It has been all things to all men, and yet it has not changed. It has decked itself in splendour, and has fitted itself to the cabin of the slave. It has filled the whole soul of the man of mighty intellect, and has satisfied the mind of low degree. It has fired the hearts of martial kings to great resolves, and has guided the nameless poor to humble deeds of mercy and love. The whole of our science of theology has grown out of it, a science second to none in difficulty and grandeur, and yet the very fulness of its blessing and its power has been poured upon those to whom theology is an empty name. It has for each the message which each needs, and how diverse are those messages in their form and in their operation; but how surely is it the same spirit which worketh all in all. We speak of the changes through which Christianity has passed, but they are chiefly changes of garb. There have been times no doubt of dark and prevailing ignorance, but even in the darkest times there have been those who possessed the one true knowledge, the love of God which passeth knowledge. There have been times of gross superstition, but the times were worse when Jehovah was still able to say, 'I have left me seven thousand men in Israel.' The spirit of the age gives in each age the outward shape which Christianity bears, and with the changing spirit of the age the outward shape has changed. It is one of the most interesting studies in the history of the Church of Christ in any country, to notice this ebb and flow on the surface of the great deep. It is one of the most instructive and educating studies to observe how one age has failed to sympathise with another in outward things; has been unable to enter into its feelings, or even to do justice to them. This feature has been prominent of late, when many practices for some time obsolete have been renewed. To take a significant example from the history of our own Church, we find one age ordering that the careless disregard of decency which has allowed wooden tables to be used in church, for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, shall be quite done away, and only stone altars shall be allowed. We know well how we have found another age declaring that an altar of stone may not be placed in a church, and only a table made of wood can be allowed. Or, to pass to less controversial times, we find one age breathing forth its ideas

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of the peacefulness and plenty of the tree of life, by carving up the shaft of the Cross exquisite scrolls, wherein birds and four-footed beasts find food and shelter. We find the next age adapting the same design to the tangled maze of the thicket, where men and even satyrs slaughter the inhabitants of the forest with their spear and with their bow.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. I began by saying how impossible it would have been for a Christian of the earliest age to forecast the Christian faith and practice of a time later by eighteen hundred years than his. How many terms of the infinite series, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, have passed since his time, and there remains a for ever as long, though we be so far from the beginning and have so fateful a past. Generations have come and gone. We are ourselves going as fast as time can fly. We are hurrying to our entry upon the real for ever, and our one hope, our one assurance, is that He changeth not. Only in that hope, only with that confidence, can we dare pass forth into an eternity not more wide than His power to save, not more endless than His love.

CANON BROWNE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Redemption. IT cost God more to redeem the word than to make it.
JER. xxiii. 5-10. He that made me with a word speaking, when He redeemed me, spake, and wept, and bled, and died to do it. What can I think too much to endure for His sake, that was made a curse for mine?

God 'repented that He made man,' but never that He redeemed him.

Salvation. IF I offer you money, you do not say to me, 'I will come to-morrow.' No, you demand it at once. No one delays, no one makes excuses. The salvation of the soul is offered, and no one hurries himself.

CHRIST was infinitely more concerned for our eternal salvation than for His own temporal preservation. Had He been rescued by the power of angels, we had fallen a prey to the paw of devils.

Salvation a Present Blessing. THE saints are not only blessed when they are comprehensors, but while they are viators. Job on the dunghill was blessed Job.


JOB ii. 7.

Holy Days.

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL

The Prospect of Suffering an Incentive to Christ's Service.

I will show him how many things he must suffer for My Name's sake.
ACTS ix. 16.

I.  HE prospect of suffering, set forth not as the condition only, but as the attraction of a life's career. The words, I know, are startling. We are from the outset in the domain of paradox. We are assuming what experience, or what is too hastily called experience, the experience of the average, seems to deny. We are going in the teeth of not a few established maxims. If we ever try to sketch out a career either for a friend or for ourselves, in what colours do we fill it in? Are they not, to put the matter briefly, the colours of success? And is it not taken for granted that success means happiness? We think we see the bent of our friend's gifts and the peculiarity of his temperament all pointing in one direction. In that direction all our hopes and plans for him shall follow. There we see favouring circumstance, rapid advance, universal sympathy and applause. So far as we can influence his choice, this prospect is part of our argument. We say to him, This is what you seem made for. Do this, and you will succeed.

There is here clearly no paradox. We are on the beaten path of approved experience. If it be the path of commonplace, is it not

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the path of common sense also? I will not stop to inquire how much of real truth and sober wisdom there may be in such counsels. I would rather suggest to you that, as long as we keep within the atmosphere which surrounds them, we scarcely seem to breathe the atmosphere of the gospels. The spirit of the gospels is heroic, or it is nothing. Just as the Master said of old, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,' so we seem to hear Him say of all such counsels of imperfection, 'Except your incentives to a life's career shall be nobler than the incentives popularly accepted as sufficient, ye have yet to learn the meaning of My service. I do not say to My servants, Give me your hearts, and ye shall be famous and successful and happy, but, Give Me your hearts, map out your lives along the lines that I shall trace for you; be ready to bear My Name and carry out My principles in whatever path I may set before you, and then, as My highest mark of favour I will show you how many things ye must suffer for that Name's sake.'

Again we say, it is the language of paradox, but then is it not the language of Christ?

II. I would say to each man who is able to receive the message, Stir up the gifts of God. Recall into life and light every consciousness ever granted you that you were able, and therefore bound, to contend for Christ's cause. But, having spoken of contending—a thought which sometimes stirs the pride within us, as well as the passion of loyalty—I would leave you with that other thought on which we have chiefly dwelt to-day. If I might presume to guide a single prayer of any young man who hears me—a single communing between himself and his God—I would counsel him to ask just this: 'O Lord, who knowest all things, prepare me for suffering. Make me strong to suffer, if it be Thy will, and to help others to suffer. Show me something of the mystery of Thine agony and Thy life-long Cross, and in Thine own time make me—even me—perfect through suffering.'

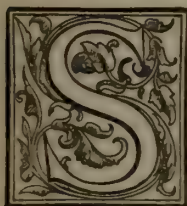
H. M. BUTLER.

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S. BARNABAS

The Inexpedience of Expediency.

Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? Acts xiv. 14, 15.



BARNABAS, whose name signifies the Son of Consolation, is continually brought before us as a character of great tenderness and sympathy. He is described indeed as a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and we know that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are manifold, and implant and produce every ray of goodness and beauty that makes up the clear light of the divine character. But among all the gifts, gentle love seems to have distinguished S. Barnabas. His conduct to Saul after his conversion, his ministry to the sufferers at Antioch, the part he took in the quarrel with S. Paul about S. John Mark, all these illustrate the tenderness of his disposition. That this degenerated into a fault is evident from S. Paul's language in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he blames S. Barnabas for giving way to the pressure of popular religious opinion at Antioch, and following S. Peter in a dissimulation that was to please a certain section of the Jewish Christians.

In these ways this great Apostle represented both in its beauty and its weakness a phase of character which is very highly esteemed at the present day in the religious world. It is a character which is very winning in its amiability and ready sympathy; but which sinks into something very like indifference or dishonesty rather than face the unpleasantness of putting disagreeable truths forward, and acting consistently on them.

On this very account it seems all the more profitable and interesting that on this day, when we would honour the memory of this great Apostle and thank God for His martyrdom, we should dwell for a little while on an occurrence where Christian courage and firmness were conspicuously displayed by this gentle Saint.

I. At the present day there are a great many people whose motto is 'Expediency.' They are a numerous class, and with many subdivisions. Some are indolent, and their favourite application of their doctrine is 'Let well alone,' or 'Things have done well enough for

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the last two hundred years, why bring them up to unsettle men's minds and cause divisions now?' Others are more active. They recognise the existence of many evils, and they wish to deal with them, but at the same time they do not wish to give offence. They value a character for gentleness, they say truly that love is the greatest of all qualities, but they add untruly that love precludes definiteness, sternness, severity.

Against these, S. Barnabas the gentle in to-day's lesson offers a striking testimony. After healing the lame man, he and S. Paul were to be worshipped as gods by the populace. They refused the homage; they rejected it with horror. Of course they did, we are told; how could they do otherwise? How could they commit such a sin against God, against the very principle they were come to teach, as to accept it? How indeed, except on the principle of expediency? How much they might have gained by accepting it. How, on the principle of seeing good in things evil, they might have recognised in the shout 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men,' a glimmering idea of the Incarnation; by joining themselves on this broad platform, how they might have conciliated a hearing for the great Christian doctrine. Then again by keeping the people in good humour, how great an influence they might have retained over them, and led them to a willing and pleasant intercourse, nay, even more directly, what influence they might have held over them, and ordered them to receive the new doctrines and practise the new rites of worship. And how easy to argue that there was no sin when they themselves inwardly rejected the worship, or pleaded that it was only accepted by them representatively for the God whom they served. How easy, in fact, to argue that to do a great right, they might do a little wrong, and without any surrender of the truth in their own hearts might ally themselves with the people, and in the bond of universal brotherhood lead them by means of their own errors to the knowledge and the practice of the truth. The temptation was just to accept for the moment a little offering of homage, and in so doing to win the whole city to their way of thinking.

II. What should be our answer when the strife of tongues is fierce; when the glare of infidelity fixes its glance of hate upon the Cross; when friends seem few, and the faith is assaulted, and men's hearts wax cold in love, and the voice of popular opinion speaks of universal brotherhood at the expense of the Fatherhood of God, or of general agreement on condition of renouncing everything that is positive enough to make a bulwark or a bond; when we are told we dare not speak of orthodoxy, and that truth is exactly what every one of the millions of men chooses to think it is; when, on the other hand, we are wooed softly to surrender and to retain our popularity at the

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expense of our principles ; when we are told that we shall win more souls by surrendering disputed points ; or when within ourselves our own weakness begs us not to forfeit our character for liberality and good nature, not to put before our people, if we are priests, doctrines which are unpalatable, and not to practise, if we are laymen, observances which provoke scorn or dislike, when the temptation is to surrender a little truth that we may gain a great deal in the eyes of men—what must our answer be ? The answer in effect of Barnabas and Paul at Lystra, the answer of our Lord in the wilderness, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ This answer involves the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled ; it is compatible with love for the souls of men that stops not short of dying for them. This answer against tremendous odds was made in the strength of the Spirit, perhaps under the encouragement of the lion-hearted S. Paul, by the gentle Barnabas ; it was made by Christ in the day of His humanity ; it may be made by any one, however weak, if made in reliance upon Christ ; just with the same difficulty, just with the same force, as it was made by any one of the noble army of martyrs, by evangelists, Apostle or prophet whose memories are honoured by the Church below, and whose souls are in the safe keeping of God, all of whom we in our weakness may remember that it was written that they too ‘out of weakness were made strong.’

G. C. HARRIS.

S. JOHN BAPTIST

Spiritual Unselfishness.

Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist : but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. S. LUKE vii. 28.

I.  E have not the power to love God so utterly without thought of self as S. John Baptist did. We know that if we believe and love Him we have all the blessedness of His Kingdom. God does not call us to renounce these blessings, and therefore it would not be right for us to forget them. Yet there is a lesson for us in the grace of this free, generous, unselfish love which God gave to S. John : for how can it become us, who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, to love Jesus less than he did, who was left outside it ? To love our Lord and Saviour, not only for what He does for us, not

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only for the blessings He gives to us, but simply for being the God He is, for doing the glorious works He does, by such love the least in the Kingdom of Heaven may become a little less unworthy to be blessed with a blessing above that of the Holy Baptist. He was not the Christ, but was sent before Him; but we do not merely come after Christ as His followers, but are a part of Him, 'members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.' Thus it is, that we have a higher call than even this most excellent among the Saints: we have a less laborious work to do, and a higher reward for doing it.

II. Much more is it true of us later Christians which the Lord said even to the Apostles at the first: 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured, and ye entered into their labours.' Our spiritual nearness to Jesus is a more precious thing than John's ministerial authority over Him, which he was almost afraid to take, when he baptized Him in the river of Jordan; more precious, even, than his sacrifice of his life for the righteousness of God's law. To have read all the glorious words of faith and love toward Jesus which were uttered by S. John, of which we read most in his namesake's gospel, all the yet more glorious works which we read of his having found grace to do, all these sound as so many reproaches to us, who have received so much more grace, been so much more favoured by our Lord, and yet have so much less to show for it. If we trusted in ourselves, in our own faithfulness to grace and worthiness, we might well despair: how should creatures like us expect to enter into the Kingdom of God, when such a man is less than the least in it? But we know that the source of our salvation is not in ourselves, that it is Christ who prepares for every man his place, whether here or in a better world. To us on earth He has given the best place, a place inside His kingdom: to S. John He gave only the best place outside it. But to all, both us and him, He will, we trust, accord a place in His kingdom that is to come, higher no doubt to him, in proportion, not only as his faith and love were greater, but as his place on earth was lower, and the favour he received less; but we all, if we abide in faith and love, shall be partakers in the kingdom with Him and with all the elect.


W. H. SIMCOX.

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S. PETER

S. Peter's Denial.

And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all. S. MARK xiv. 27-31.

I.  It is for our learning, no doubt, that it is written that 'all the disciples forsook Him, and fled,' and that Peter denied Him thrice in one night; but the way for us to learn the lesson God's Spirit intends is not to talk of these as great and heartless sins, things that we should never do the like of. It will be more profitable to consider them as very natural infirmities, just what we should naturally do ourselves, unless God gave us special grace; too often, indeed, things just like what we actually have done. For, while I speak of the disciples who forsook or denied the Lord among those who added to His sufferings, we must remember that, directly and actively, they did Him no harm at all—only failed to give Him the comfort, or at most the help, that their presence and sympathy might have given. The first time that they failed Him, when, during His Agony, Peter and James and John went to sleep for sorrow, instead of watching with Him, He showed that He understood how it was; He said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Now we are all (all of us at least who are familiar enough with the words of the gospel to be able to use them at all), we all, I say, are in the habit of using these words as an excuse for any weakness of our own; we say it is only the flesh that is weak, and that the spirit is willing; and we think that that is enough to excuse us. This is not, indeed, how our Lord meant and used the words; for He said at the same time, 'Rise, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' The weakness of the flesh is not an excuse for yielding to it, but is only a temptation that ought to be guarded against by watching and prayer; still, the disciples only yielded to a temptation that we commonly yield to, one that we see no harm in yielding to.

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And so again when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, we may say that they ought not to have done so, that they would have shown more love to the Lord if they had not. From the way that He speaks in the text of their being offended, or, as S. John reports the same or a like saying, 'Ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone,' it is plain that He would rather have had them stay with Him, follow Him to the judgment, and stand by Him there. In one way we may conceive that they could have done Him real service if they had; when 'the High Priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine,' if some of His disciples had boldly come forward to bear witness to His doctrine, to prove how righteous it was, and in agreement with God's law, it would have made it harder to give judgment against the Lord, seeing that, even as it was, the council found it hard to get any evidence on which they could condemn Him with any show of justice or legality. But, whether He wanted the support of their testimony or only of their sympathy, He Himself at last gave them leave to go away; He said to the officers, 'If ye seek Me, let these go their way.' He knew that there would be a real danger, if they followed Him, of their having to go with Him to prison, if not to death; when one did offer to follow Him, S. Mark and S. Luke tell us 'the young men laid hold on him,' and we should surely have said that he at least had plenty of excuse for fleeing. The Lord knew, at any rate, that to go with Him to His trial would be a risk greater than their faith was yet able to bear; so in order that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, 'Of them that Thou gavest Me I have lost none,' He asked that they should be allowed to go away; and go away they did.

II. All left Him for the moment; but two of the eleven soon took courage, and did follow Him after all. Whether or no S. John was (as has been guessed) the young man in the linen cloth who tried to follow Jesus at first, he certainly did follow Him afterwards, 'and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High priest.' Perhaps, seeing that 'that disciple was known unto the High Priest,' he ran less risk than the rest; but he did not hide that he was one of Jesus' disciples—probably indeed all the servants knew it—for, as all the gospels tell us, the question put to S. Peter was, 'Art not thou also one of them?' thou also, as well as John? Peter, though he too had taken courage and followed Jesus, now, when he was asked that question, denied it; and we profess to be greatly shocked at his denial, at his failure in love to his Master. Yet, if we look only for ordinary human love and faithfulness and devotion on the disciples' part, dare we say that such a denial proved failure in these? I will not say how far S. Peter was weakened and made afraid because he

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had put himself in the wrong by drawing his sword on the High Priest's servant, resisting a lawful arrest, which might and ought to have been followed by a fair trial and a just acquittal; but it is certain that S. Peter, whether through his own fault or the fault of the judges, was in real danger, if he had been known for Jesus' disciple. There have been other men, since our Lord, who have been put to death, not for evil deeds but for good; not to instance the case of Christ's own martyrs, we may name the Marquis of Montrose in our own history; or Andrew Hoffer, who was shot by Napoleon; or old John Brown of Harper's Ferry in our own youth. All these were condemned to death for deeds that they thought honourable, and which posterity honours; all these had, as they deserved, loyal and devoted comrades. Now if one of these comrades of theirs had followed his leader to the judgment hall, to see the end—perhaps with some vague hope of a rescue; if he was recognised in the crowd by his rough Highland accent, and asked, 'Art not thou also one of them?' should we think it very shocking, or that it proved he had no love to his Captain, if he said, 'I do not know the man'?

III. If we will be Jesus's disciples we must learn really, and not only in profession to love Him above and before everything, to allow nothing to interfere with His service, nothing to draw us aside from our duty to Him. And let us remember that we have more done for us than had been yet done for the Apostles when they were blamed for forsaking the Lord. He had not yet died to atone for their sins of nature. He had not yet sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen and embolden them in His service. After He had done these things for them they never failed again as they did now. Within a few weeks or months, Peter and John first, and then all the Apostles, did follow Jesus to prison, and there was talk even of putting them to death; within a few years, James the brother of John first, and then almost all the others, did die for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now, we have been redeemed, as they were, from the power of sin; we have received, as they did, the Spirit of Righteousness. We have then no excuse if we show in our lives a weakness sinking below their weakness; we ought to be like them—like, if not equal to them—in their new, vigorous, spiritual life. It is not indeed necessary—it is not, we may say, possible—that we should have grace equal to that given to the Apostles; but we are not tried as they were. It is necessary that we shall be as faithful, as devoted to our Lord as they were; that we shall resist our petty every-day temptations, which are all that God in His mercy allows to attack us, as resolutely as they met their sore trials and persecutions, and that we shall overcome them as completely. To serve Christ consistently, when the flesh is

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weak, not to take that as an excuse, but to strengthen the weak flesh by watching and prayer; and again, to confess Christ openly, not to go out of our way to tell the world that we are His servants, but never to shrink from its being found out—never, at any rate, to fail in doing our duty for fear that the world may possibly find out what we do and why we do it—this is absolutely necessary, if we are to be true disciples of Christ. This, I repeat, His Apostles did, from the time that they were redeemed and inspired by Christ; and we, for whom the same Blood has been shed, to whom the same Spirit is given—we also are called to do the same. W. H. SIMCOX.

FEAST OF S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

The Ministry of Angels.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently send Me more than twelve legions of angels? S. MATTHEW xxvi. 53.



It may be well for us to make sure in our minds that we do believe in the existence of angels. We cannot see them, yet we believe that they are. We do not think of angels as though they were fairies, or some mere outcome of the poet's imagination, but we believe in the existence of angels because the Bible tells us of them. And therefore it is well for us just to remind ourselves how impossible it is to tear the belief in angels out of the Bible. You must tear your Bible to pieces if you wish to get rid of the teaching of the existence of angels. For you will find the angel mentioned from beginning to end throughout the whole of the sacred volume. You remember how in the first book, Genesis, we read after the fall of Adam and Eve, that God placed the cherubim with the flaming sword to guard the access to the tree of life. In the very first book, in the beginning of the first book, the existence of angels is mentioned; and all down the different books till you come to the last book, the Revelation of S. John. There you hear plainly what the divine seer said. 'I heard,' he says, 'the voice of many angels round about the throne: the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' And so again we know, if we wanted to make it even doubly sure that it is not a fanciful gathering from different parts of the Bible. The Divine Master Himself again and again speaks to us of the angels; again and again He tells us in His teaching, sometimes

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in parable, sometimes in plain statement, sometimes prophetically: He tells us of the existence of holy angels; and tells us that when He comes again He will not come like a little child to be born and laid in the manger of Bethlehem; but when He comes again to judgment He will come, and all the holy angels with Him.

The Saviour again and again gives us to understand that there exist these invisible holy beings. And so the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks very plainly of it as part of the greatness of the Christian's inheritance, that 'we are come to an innumerable company of angels.' They are called by different names, angels or archangels, principalities, dominions, authority, power, thrones, cherubim and seraphim, now in one name, now in another, it may be to signify to us different degrees and power. But the fact remains, without any ground for questioning, that if we believe the Bible, we believe in the existence of holy angels.

When we go out at night and look up to the stars, and see them in their innumerable brightness, they might remind us of the innumerable company of angels, and it would be well for us if from time to time we renewed our faith.

But then, assuming that you, as believers in the Scriptures, believe also with me in the existence of angels, what are some of the practical lessons that we ought to gather from the revealed fact? The Saviour Himself has given us three or four very plain lessons.

I. First, perhaps, I might say, He would have us think of the angels as giving us an example of perfect obedience. In the prayer which He has given us to say every day, the Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' and 'Give us this day our daily bread,' as He would have us say it every day, so every day He would have us think of the angels when He says, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That will is done in heaven, in part, by the holy angels; perfectly they do it, and the Saviour has the will to place their example in the prayer which every Christian man and woman and child should say with all their heart every day. We have, then, there in the prayer the thought reminding us of the angels. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' As the angels do that will most perfectly, as the will of God is to them a law which not one transgresses, so should we set it before ourselves as the model of our lives. As the holy angels do that will in perfection in heaven, so should we strive to do it on earth.

II. One other lesson the Saviour has given us, that the angels do not make any account of the wealth of this world, or of the rank and the pomp in estimating those whom they will take care of. They do not want money for their trouble. You know what I mean, the parable of Dives and Lazarus. The Saviour there tells us of a rich

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man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a poor man, a beggar, who lay at his door, so full of sores that the dogs even came and licked them, and nobody took notice. When the rich man died he had a funeral, he was buried. When the beggar died we are not told that he had any kind of funeral, or any notice taken of him; but the Saviour does tell us that the angels took that soul into Abraham's bosom. Surely when we think of that, the thought of the angels and the angels' work does leave a precious and a practical conclusion for us. When we are estimating what is great and what is noble, do we determine it by the wealth, and by the rank, and by the power of this world, or have we made up our minds unalterably to a quiet and meek spirit; those are the ornaments which make a soul precious in the sight of God? A quiet and meek spirit. Gentleness, meekness, quietness, humility, purity, these are the ornaments, these are the jewels that the angels look for, these are the things which are precious in their sight. Surely when we renew, as to-day, our belief in the angels, we should examine ourselves and ask whether we have been led astray by all the glittering gaud of this world's modern wealth, or whether we honestly do value men, not in the way of patronising them, but in the way of real admiration and brotherly love, if he be a man of good life, a Christ-like, loving man, though he be as poor as Lazarus. That is the doctrine of the example of the angels.

III. There is another practical lesson, which we can gather, that our Lord has given us. He has told us in those words of His that we know so well, that 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' You know the occasion of His saying that. He had told the little parable of the lost sheep. If a man had a hundred sheep and lose one of them, he will leave the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost until he find it. And when he finds it, then he will put it upon his shoulders and carry it back rejoicing, and he will gather his friends and his neighbours together and say, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' 'So,' says the Saviour, 'there is joy in heaven, amongst the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.' Or, the Saviour again, to make it clear, and drive it home to them, What woman shall have ten pieces of silver and she lose one, will not light a candle, and sweep the house, and look diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, then she calleth her friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which was lost.' 'So,' says the Saviour, 'there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.'

BISHOP KING.

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ALL SAINTS DAY

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the enemies of the aliens. HEBREWS xi. 32-34.



OD'S revelation is framed from end to end in the example and the lives of men, their characters and their careers. Patriarchs, judges, kings, poets, prophets pass before us in order. They are intrusted with messages from God, with successive revelations of His nature and will; but if we had not their biographies, frankly, freely told, nothing extenuated, and nothing set down in malice, to illustrate and commend those messages and revelations, how poor we should be, how incalculable our loss! Nay, we cannot conceive how the Bible could have been the Bible were it not written in the lives of men, with all their triumphs and disasters, all their strength and weakness. Every heavenly grace, such as love, is revealed to us in the persons of those who love: every theological mystery, such as faith, is illustrated in the lives of those who had it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds no more sure and satisfactory means of explaining what faith is than in enumerating the men of old time, who owed to it the secret of their power. 'By faith,' Abel; 'by faith,' Enoch; 'by faith,' Noah, won this or that victory over themselves or over the world. And instead of apologising for filling his pages with the praise of men, he only regrets that he has not space for more. 'Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, of Barak, and Samson, of David, and Samuel, and the prophets.' He implies that even these are but samples, samples of all those ('of whom the world was not worthy') who in a generation absorbed in its private interests and lusts, breathing the low atmosphere of an earthly life, were separate from the world in this, that they were fighting for an Ideal, driven on by a passionate faith in the God of Israel. Through faith they were subduing kingdoms, and 'out of weakness were made strong.'

I. This passage, as we all remember, is from one of the Lessons for the Festival of All Saints, and very precious it is in that connection, as helping us to keep our conception of the saintly function large and catholic, and as protecting us against the subtle temptation to identify the saintly ideal with any one type, congenial to ourselves, or perhaps our party. It is very salutary to be forced to recognise persons, the most various in character and temperament, as well as in

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powers and opportunities, as saints—saints, with all their failings and blemishes; saints, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews classes them, by virtue of the aim they set before them, the steadfastness with which they pursued it, the utter self-abnegation by which they met suffering and death for its sake. It forces us to recognise that God's kingdom in this world has been, in all times, advanced by men, in whom many of those ways and manners we have come to call specially 'saintly' were conspicuously absent. The writer of the Epistle before us chooses his specimens from what appears to us the rudest, roughest, most lawless period of Jewish history; when the manners of men, however ardent they were to defend the cause of the true God, could not have had that repose which stamps the caste of the modern saint—of the type we most naturally call saintly—the meditative, the calm, the devotional. When we study the lives of a Jephthah, a Samson, a Gideon, with all their strange, grotesque, and even forbidding incidents, and read that these men were the saints of whom the world was not worthy, the idea of an orderly, meek, resigned 'religious life' is, from the nature of the case, far enough off.

Certain technical associations have gathered about the phrase the 'religious life,' which ill suit with the character and career of a Samson. Yet his critic, in our text, includes him as living such a life, merely because he worked and suffered to keep alive the idea and the authority of a true God, a God of purity and righteousness, when the allurements of idolatry were all around drawing men away with a fearful destructiveness. The career of a Gideon impresses us indeed as that of a fearless soldier, possessed by an enthusiasm for God. He comes in truth nearer home to our sympathies, for we have known such soldier-saints in many an age nearer to our own. But the real work he did, the real work that all these men did, is told us more clearly by something that happened after his death than by all that we read of his personal actions. His biographer in the Book of Judges tells us this most significant fact, 'And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a-whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.' This is what the men called 'saints' do for their own generation, and for all generations, unless they utterly pass out of men's memories and records. They help, with all their varied gifts, talents, opportunities, to keep alive the claims of the true Lord on men's spirits, against the idolatries of the Canaan in which they live. This is the bond which unites and harmonises all these various personalities; which makes kin the centuries before Christ and the centuries after: this it is which stamps and defines the one quality of the saint: and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls it faith.

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He calls it faith, and his clear object is to show its identity with the power, bearing the same name, which Jesus Christ had brought with Him, as His greatest gift to men, 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith.' Faith, the one essential bond between saint and saint. And yet, this word of words, when divorced from human history and the triumphs it has won, how easily it dwindles into a theological abstraction, the topic of a thousand writers, the source and fount of a thousand controversies. How often has the word, separated from life and action, been

'Profaned by every charlatan,
And soiled by all ignoble use.'

And hence the inestimable boon of such a Scripture as this, where the unknown but learned and devout writer goes back a thousand years and more in his nation's history to find there the true essence and virtue of faith, and to commend it to men already entangling in the controversies of metaphysics. Did he already notice that faith, the central word (on man's side) in Old and New Testaments, and the connecting-link between them, was about to acquire new meanings and pass from out men's lives into their formulae, a thing to talk about, to study, and to analyse? Did he perceive that men might come to regard faith as something to live for, instead of something to live by; to cherish faith as itself 'an article of faith'; to (the instrument), in place of relying upon God? Was it for this that he pointed back to a state of society even then so remote and so different, to a state of society when theology and morals were as yet all but comprised in the simple alternative, 'If the Lord be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him'? Whatever the writer's motive, this course he took. He interpreted and commended the faith which Christ taught, by the faith of those ancient times, to show that the two were identical, and given to men for an identical purpose. New and fuller revelations of God had indeed come to men; faith was furnished with a wider, a deeper outlook, but its mission was the same always, to enable men to live above the world, and to win the world to follow them.

II. 'The time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak, of Samson and of Jephthah.' It is impossible to mistake the significant language in which this writer accentuates over and over again the one quality which knits together all these discordant elements into one bond of saintly work; almost as if he foresaw the narrowing tendency of diverging opinions to limit the saintly ideal. He even begins by defining faith in terms, independent of theologies, ancient or modern, and never to be affected by any changes of human knowledge or opinion. He makes that definition as wide, as all-

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embracing as it can be. Faith (I quote from our Revised Version) 'is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.'

Nothing can be simpler, more beyond all cavilling. It is the acting upon a conviction of things we do not see, as if we did see them, and the proving the truth of them by tests more certain than eyesight. And immediately after, he adds another fragment of description, which shall still further serve to keep true faith distinct from all counterfeits. 'He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Now the first of these utterances, if we really accept it, should keep our conception of the saint large; if, that is to say, the saint is the man or woman who keeps his or her faith unshaken in the midst of a faithless world. I began by saying that our natural bias is to attach to certain forms and expressions of holiness the name of saintly. And the Scripture for All Saints Day most wisely brings together, side by side, the most opposite—or rather all the complementary aspects—of the saintly life. While in the Lesson we are reminded of Gideon, Samson, and Barak; in the Gospel for the day, we are referred, by the enumeration of our Lord's beatitudes, to the gentler, more passive graces, of the saint. 'Blessed are the meek; blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Here is the saintly type after our own heart: we do with all our heart and soul recognise in such as these the reflection of the holiness and purity of God. It is only when we turn in thought from these to the saints who seem so little like them, in the Book of Judges, that we need the larger definition of the saint, as one who has faith while the world has none, to keep us from confusion and disillusion. We know indeed no more of a man like Samson than the stirring record of his outward fortunes; but if the saint be the meek, the student of holiness, the hungerer and thirster after righteousness, who shall reconcile the two conceptions? No one, nothing, save the clew which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us, faith the one touch of 'grace' that makes all God's servants 'kin.' Not alone by faith do men subdue kingdoms; by faith also they subdue themselves: not only by faith do they overcome their enemies; by faith also they overcome the world. In fighting for others' salvation, or their own, they are alike doing the saints' office, and are true to the work given them to do, which is different for every man. And all alike must suffer. Suffering is the badge of all their tribe. Faith, the starting-point, suffering the inevitable condition; these are the same for all, whether it be a Gideon fighting for a God of Israel against Baalim, or the mourner for his own sin and weakness, weeping in loneliness through the midnight hours. Let neither of these

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deny to his fellow the name of saint, or the ministry of saintliness. Each has his work to do, each does it imperfectly, and through failures, disappointments, and humiliations. The saint is not a faultless creature, either in himself or in his methods. But he believes something which the world does not believe, and lives above the world, and of him the world is not worthy.

Let us strive to keep our conception of the saint wide and catholic. Let us love to trace the saintly function, not chiefly among those who share our methods and our views, but among those furthest removed from such. For in the presence of that word faith, all walls of party should fall to the ground. There are those who will resent this advice, and take alarm lest if we widen the area of saintliness we should be in danger of lowering its standard. I believe the very opposite of this to be the truth. Keeping firmly hold of faith as the one essential test of the saint's work, we shall be best able to distinguish the true faith from the spurious, the true saint from the sham. Wherever faith is seen in action, there is a saint of God at work. Wherever in lonely village, in squalid court, the sorely-tempted man is labouring for God's sake to preserve his honesty: wherever the friendless and starving woman is struggling to be pure, because the vision of the Holy One is ever before her, there is the saint. It is only when faith is a watchword and a sentiment, but nothing more, that, however sweet and sentimental the environment, the saintliness has lost its savour, and is useless to the world. It has no regenerative, no contagious virtue. That is not the faith that kindles other faith, and hands on the torch along the march of men.

It is our great men, who have the gift of faith, who help us to have it and to live above the world. Let us cherish their memory, and speak of them and honour them. And not the least precious among these are our poets; for when they pass away, their power remains, and even widens, and is strengthened. 'Their place is changed, they are the same.' They do not 'die to us, although they die.' Yet we dare not worship them, or make a religion out of them; for the worship of any God short of the highest means degradation and corruption. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' They are not the light, they but reflect the light. 'Jesus Christ is to me,' said Tennyson one day, 'as is the sun to yonder flower.' So must it be to us, for power comes from the source, not from the colour, beauty, charm of the reflection. 'And the Light was the life of men.'

CANON AINGER.



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